

External Review of IDRC's Food, Environment, and Health (FEH) Program 2015-2020 – Final Report

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Executive Summary

Context. The goal of the Food, Environment, and Health (FEH) program is to improve the health of low- and middle-income country (LMIC) populations by generating evidence, innovations and policies that reduce the health and economic burdens of preventable chronic and infectious diseases. The purpose of this summative evaluation was to provide evidence and recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of IDRC's FEH strategic body of research programming across Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East and enhance its outcomes. The evaluation was conducted at the FEH *program level* with an evaluation timeframe between April 1st 2015 and March 31st 2019.

Methods. The University of Toronto (UofT) applied a multiple-methods approach using qualitative and quantitative methods and diverse data sources. This included a document review based on a sub-sample of 43 research projects (20% of the total FEH portfolio) selected on the basis of a detailed sampling strategy, 33 key informant interviews with a representative response rate across all interviewee categories, four stand-alone case studies developed based on a set framework agreed upon by FEH staff and UofT, and a landscape assessment to set the context in which FEH operates and to frame the interpretation of evaluation findings.

Main Evaluation findings

- **Program Strategy:** IDRC's key corporate strategy objectives for 2015-2020 and lessons from previous programs were well addressed through the FEH program with complementary team expertise across its thematic aims and objectives. Diverse and fragmented programming scope posed challenges to FEH's program's coherence. As a recognized thought leader in building the field of food systems research, its field building approach is relevant and adapted to differences in regional contexts, yet it lacks a single field building agenda for the entire program.
- **Strategic issues:** While Gender, Scale, and Southern Leadership were well integrated into FEH's programming, more attention could be given to the conceptualization and operationalization of Equity and Environmental Sustainability. A variety of strategies, time and effort to harness both formal and informal partnerships was documented, yet more resources could improve efficiency and strategic targeting of partnership development efforts. FEH's respectful approach to partnering and relationship-building to fund research in LMICs, giving high levels of autonomy and ownership to researchers and other actors in the Global South was widely recognized and contributed strongly to perceptions as a partner and research funder of choice.
- **Programmatic outcomes:** An integrated approach to tackle policy and practice influence, the generation of new knowledge and enhancing research capacity across FEH projects was clearly found, with emerging evidence of policy influence. Research capacity was predominantly built at the individual level, with some evidence of institution-building. New knowledge was well integrated into the sampled projects' design. Workshops have been a key mechanism for knowledge sharing across all three outcome areas (policy and practice influence, generation of new knowledge and enhancing research capacity) and to support strategic issues like gender and equity. A better balance in FEH's policy focus on the regulation of unhealthy foods and the promotion of healthier diets could be struck. Certain strategic issues were strategically better aligned with outputs and immediate outcomes across the spheres of control and influence.
- **Knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation:** A wealth of documentation was generated during this period; however, there remains an untapped potential for drawing lessons learned, as tracking processes have not yet been optimized.

Conclusion. The FEH program is making good progress toward its overall goal. By adopting a systems approach through its research investments moving forward, FEH could better address the structural and socio-economic and environmental determinants of NCDs, as well as better attend to commercial drivers of health, gender, and equity. In light of this program-level evaluation, it is recommended that the IDRC protects program coherence by reducing the number of thematic aims, leverages established programming approaches by further integrating strategic issues, develops a formal partnership strategy that aligns with FEH goals with specific metrics for measuring success, and harmonises indicators with measurable outcomes to allow for more systematic program-level capture of research and policy findings.

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Introduction and Context

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) funds research in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) to solve practical development problems. The IDRC achieves its vision through three strategic objectives: Invest in knowledge and innovation for large-scale positive change; build the leaders for today and tomorrow; and, be the partner of choice for greater impact. Improvement of gender equality is an aim across all IDRC programming. Global health research at the IDRC is supported through key health programs, including the Food, Environment and Health Program (FEH).

The goal of the FEH program is to improve the health of LMIC populations, and its objectives are to generate evidence, innovations and policies that reduce the health and economic burdens of preventable chronic and infectious diseases. Organized around three core themes (Food-related chronic diseases or Food Systems -FS, Infectious Diseases -ID and Tobacco Control- TC), each with its own program strategy, the program makes investments that build research capacity, increase knowledge and innovation and influence policy in strategic thematic areas broadly aimed at preventing and reducing the rising burden of non-communicable diseases (NCD).

As a priority, the FEH program seeks to influence shifts in local FS and dietary trends toward healthier diets (more nutritious and less processed foods, particularly those high in fat, sugar and salt) by targeting the major risk factors, determinants and drivers of the global, food-related, NCD pandemic. Complementary work focuses on tobacco as a major contributor to the global NCD burden, and aims to bring innovations to scale, building upon the success of TC research supported by prior IDRC programs and others. The FEH program also manages targeted investments on the prevention and control of ID driven by social and environmental changes that perennially and unpredictably threaten the health and livelihoods of low- and middle-income populations.

The FEH program portfolio is diverse, ranging from research that influences the design, implementation and impact assessment of public policy interventions, and multi-sector actions for addressing the detrimental effects of unhealthy diets, to the tackling of social (including gender) and environmental determinants of infectious and non-communicable diseases. The program as a whole contributes to addressing the burden of disease through primary and secondary prevention approaches. Investments target population health determinants outside the health sector (i.e. fiscal, economic, trade, and agriculture policies) and effective and sustainable interventions by stakeholders from other sectors (civil society, public and private organizations). Recent and ongoing projects continue to build upon and extend a body of knowledge, leadership and success of research supported by past IDRC funding, namely Ecosystems and Human Health (Ecohealth) and the Non-Communicable Disease Prevention Program (NCDP). The FEH's portfolio includes major prior investments developed through the lens of former conceptual frameworks and implementation strategies, with 61% of projects supported to date initiated before the start of the program (April 1st 2015).

Partnership building within FEH occurs at multiple levels and with a range of partners – from donors to country level actors to researchers, and with other stakeholders. The program relies on a variety of approaches to partnering and relationship-building.

Between April 2015 to April 2019, FEH had investments totalling \$43.5 million (see *Table 1*), with 62% invested in FS. FS research is the programming priority that has relatively limited international attention and evidence available to guide public policy interventions, advocacy, and action for improving healthy eating and healthy diets in LMICs.

Table 1. FEH investments up to April 2019

Programming theme	# of projects	\$CAD
Food systems	50 projects	\$26.9M
Tobacco control	20 projects	\$ 7.6M
Infectious diseases	26 projects	\$6.9M
Other NCD activities	8 projects	\$1.4M
Awards	5 projects	\$487K

FEH has engaged in 11 funding partnerships (6 in ID, 2 each in FS and NCD, and 1 in TC) totalling \$100.6 million, with an average funding amount per active partnered project of \$10.1 million, and an average and median partnership ratio (donor contribution/IDRC contribution) for active projects of 7.2 and 1.55, respectively. FEH is working with 35 different funding partners, in either co-funding arrangements (i.e. the IDRC administers the funds from other donors to implement co-funding programs), parallel funding partnerships (i.e. the IDRC and another donor both allocate financial resources to a project or program that is initiated or co-initiated by the IDRC), or more informal partnerships but significantly coordinated in terms of its implementation by both parties.

Evaluation purpose and audiences

The purpose of this summative evaluation is to provide evidence and recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of IDRC's FEH strategic body of research programming across Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East and enhance its outcomes. Although FEH pursued three concurrent aims during its first program cycle, the present evaluation focuses on the theme - *prevention of food-related chronic diseases*, which targets the major risk factors and drivers of the global, food-related NCD pandemic. The primary emphasis is therefore on evaluating the FEH program's influence in shifting local and national food systems and dietary trends towards healthier and sustainable diets in LMIC populations, and with prevention and control of selected infectious diseases and tobacco control policies as complementary areas of focus.

Based on IDRC guidance, this evaluation is conducted at the FEH *program* level in order to: 1) address the results that matter to the FEH program; 2) examine how the FEH program strategies translate along their impact pathways toward development outcomes that include new and enhanced funding partnerships; 3) address the program portfolio as a whole, providing a clear rationale for any sampling strategy; and 4) include independent judgement from the UofT evaluation team. This evaluation does not assess matters traditionally referred to as "impacts" such as the socio-economic, political, and environmental trends and end states (e.g. poverty reduction as a result of policy change). Rather, it only focuses on the FEH Program's activities, outputs and immediate results in the "spheres"¹ of control and influence as defined by the IDRC (Ofir et al., 2016).

¹ The spheres show that the technical conceptualization and execution of the research, and the production of research outputs, are largely under the control of the researchers, funders, and program managers. The influence that the research might have on policy and practice is sometimes, but not

A planning meeting² with IDRC's FEH staff took place in mid-April 2019 to discuss and refine the evaluation questions and lines of inquiry. It was agreed to adopt a participatory evaluation approach with two main areas of focus - program strategy and program outcomes- across the following six evaluation questions:

Focus area	Evaluation questions
Program strategy	Given the context, risks and opportunities that emerged over the period, how well has FEH implemented a strategic body of research programming in the identified thematic areas of programming?
	How effectively has FEH integrated the following strategic issues into their programming: Gender and Equity, Scale, Partnerships, Southern Leadership and Environmental Sustainability?
	The FEH program has emerged from years of IDRC experience; how well has the program learned from previous work?
Program outcomes	What contributions (intended and unintended, and in various "spheres") has FEH made to influence/effect policy/practice, enhance research capacity, and increase new knowledge?
	How has the inclusion of the five aforementioned strategic issues influenced outcomes of policy/practice, research capacity, and the generation of new knowledge? If so, how has it influenced these outcomes?
	What are the most relevant and significant opportunities for FEH moving forward?

The evaluation provides insights on progress made in supporting: research sensitive to gender equity; Southern-led research coalitions; research efforts to strengthen high-impact policy interventions; innovations targeting population health determinants; enhancement of environmental sustainability; and coordinated partnership development between private, non-governmental and public sectors and the international funder community.

The intended audiences or users of the evaluation consist primarily of IDRC's Board of Governors and Management, followed by the FEH Program team, and grantees, the research community, the general public, as well as current and future funding partners.

Evaluation methodology, data collection protocol, and limitations

This FEH evaluation applied a multiple-methods approach using qualitative and quantitative methods and diverse data sources (see *Table 2* for details).

Data was collected and lines of evidence triangulated to address all six evaluation questions while making optimal use of existing data. The evaluation timeframe under review was **between April 1st 2015 and March 31st 2019**, including critical investments initiated before 2015 that became significant and strategic pieces of work within this evaluation period. An ethics protocol for this evaluation was prepared and approved by the University of Toronto's Research Ethics Board on May 16th 2019 – protocol #37571.

Research staff and graduate students from the University of Toronto with relevant and complementary expertise conducted a team-based program evaluation. The work was coordinated by Victoria Sauveplane-Stirling, with Professors Dan Sellen (PI) and Erica Di Ruggiero (Co-PI) as scientific leads (short biographies in *Annex 8*). All evaluation team members contributed to data collection and analysis of all six questions based on their expertise.

always, in their **sphere of influence**. <https://www.idrc.ca/sites/default/files/sp/Documents%20EN/Research-Quality-Plus-A-Holistic-Approach-to-Evaluating-Research.pdf>

² This meeting took place between April 16th-17th 2019 in Ottawa. Main topics discussed include existing and emerging foci for the FEH evaluation as well as insights from the FEH program and other IDRC staff about particularly relevant evaluation topics.

Table 2. Overview of FEH Program Evaluation Methodology

Methodology	Sources	Sample	Approach	Analysis
Document Review	<p><u>Primary:</u> relevant project- and program-level documents from the FEH's <i>SharePoint</i> database</p> <p><u>Secondary:</u> FEH's <i>Trackify</i> database</p>	Purposive sample of 43 projects using a series of random weights across FEH thematic aims, applying probability proportional to size of the investment	Data were extracted using two templates – one for program-level, one for sampled project-level documentation	<p>Statistical software</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STATA for quantitative data; • NVivo for qualitative data
Key Informant Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff members at IDRC administering the FEH program or overseeing it; • Representatives of organizations who engage with FEH program, whether as donors/partners, or advisors/consultants/ knowledge user (i.e. global policy actors, policymakers); • Direct recipients of funding (i.e. grantees). 	<p>33 FEH stakeholders drawn from a larger list of 75 individuals provided by IDRC based on the sampled projects.</p> <p>Interviews took place between June 13th and July 15th, 2019.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment email; • Consent form requiring prior signature from respondent; • Qualitative interview guides adapted to the three different audiences; • ZOOM platform for audio-recording 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcription of verbatim narrative data from interview recordings • Categorization by themes based on evaluation questions and indicators • Testing of codes • Matrix analysis techniques using deductive thematic content analysis using NVivo statistical software
Landscape Assessment	Relevant academic and grey literature, media coverage, program-level documentation (e.g. IDRC commissioned reports)	Purposive review of the context staging FEH's areas of programming and major trends to address strategic issues of FEH	Expert review for the extraction of relevant insights	Framing the interpretation of results, case studies and recommendations
Case Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two data extraction templates from Document Review; • Content from Key Informant Interviews; • Insights drawn from Landscape Assessment. 	4 case studies developed based on themes approved by FEH program team	Case study templates highlighting how FEH program's strategy interrelates with program outcomes	Triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data sources

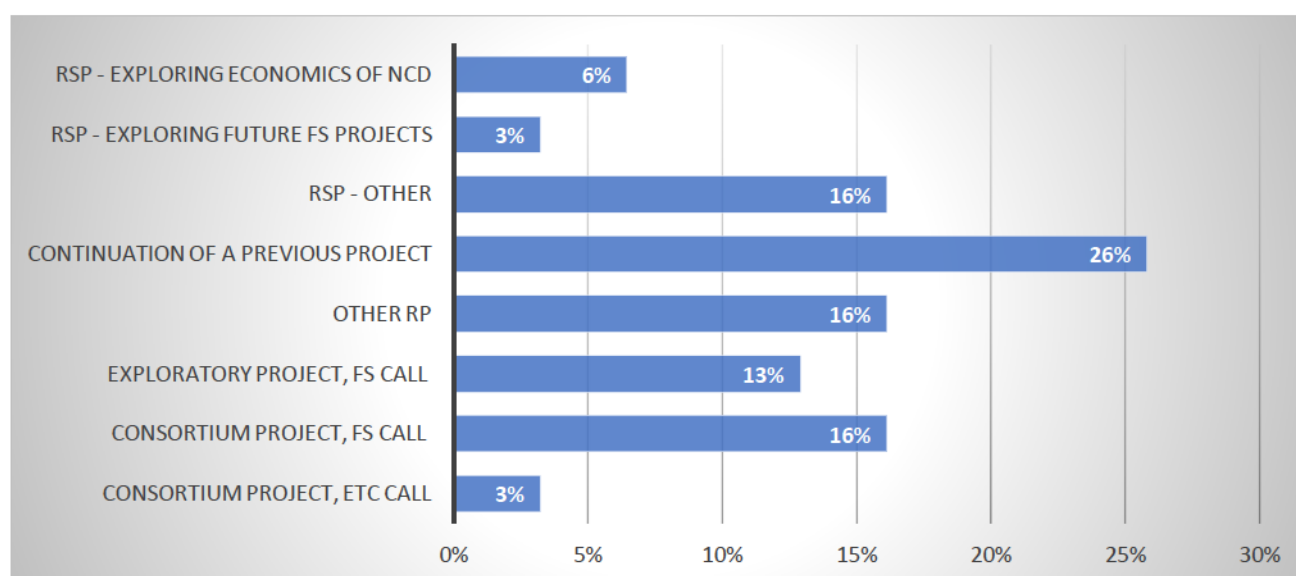
Sampling approach: A sub-sample of 43 research projects (20% of the total FEH portfolio) was selected for in-depth review, based on a detailed sampling strategy (*Annex 6*). The evaluation team randomly selected 54 projects (25% of the total FEH portfolio) to achieve a representative regional distribution based on probability proportional to size of IDRC investment (i.e. higher dollar value projects had a proportionately greater chance of being selected). The FEH program team was consulted to ensure a balanced distribution across FEH program themes and regions. Some RPs were removed from the initial 54 projects as they pertained to awards about projects not funded during the evaluation timeframe.

The final sample included 23 open and 20 closed projects, with over 50% of the sampled investments coming from Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) Research Projects (RP), among which 31 projects were approved/funded (including some already closed projects) within FEH's cycle. Of the 31 projects (see *Figure 1*);

- 32% were responses to either consortium or exploratory calls for proposals;
- 26% built on previous RP;
- 25% were Research Support Projects (RSP), and

- 16% included a Closed Africa Call, a Call for proposals on Zika or Ebola, or invitations for ideas or strategic investment in FS.

Figure 1. Overview of sampled projects funded within FEH (April 1st 2015 to March 31st 2019)



Document Review: Desk review of project- and program-level documents from internal IDRC databases (i.e. *SharePoint* and *Trackify*) included project monitoring reports, project approval documents (PAD), project completion reports (PCR) and FEH Impact Pathways and prior external evaluations (*Annex 3*).

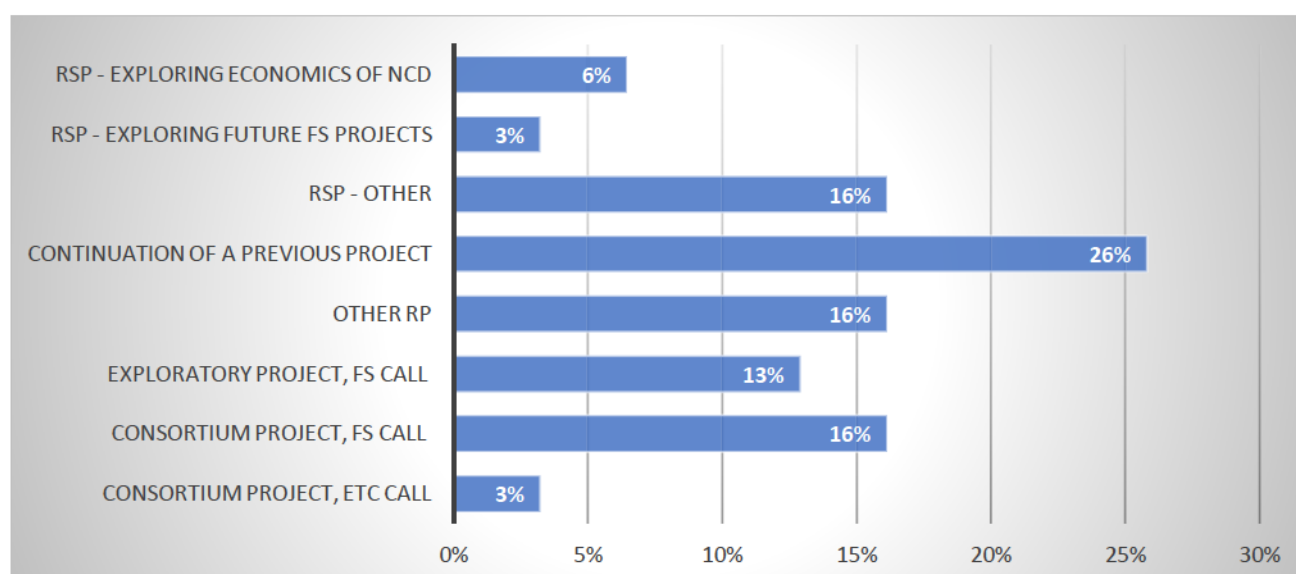
Key Informant Interviews: Key informants were recruited from a list of 83 provided by IDRC program staff drawing from four interviewee categories: donors/partners, advisors/consultants/knowledge users (i.e. global policy actors, policymakers, advisors and consultants who provided technical support/advice to the FEH), grantees, and IDRC staff. Of the 75 contacted (i.e. we excluded who had already retired from or left their organization), 33 agreed to participate.

The evaluation team achieved a representative response rate across all interviewee categories: 100% (11/11) for IDRC staff; 50% (4/8) for donors and partners; 32% (12/37) for grantees; and 31% (6/19) for advisors/consultants/knowledge users (*Figure 2*). All 33 interviewees (see *Annex 7* for their details) signed consent forms; or, following an explanation of the purpose and process of the interview, informants provided verbal consent during the interview and then submitted a signed consent form.

Interviews were conducted by two members of the evaluation team (a primary interviewer and secondary observer) using the ZOOM platform. Written transcripts of recorded interviews were analyzed thematically, along with interviewer and observer notes. Three interview guides were used, adapted to different interviewee categories (see *Annex 8*).

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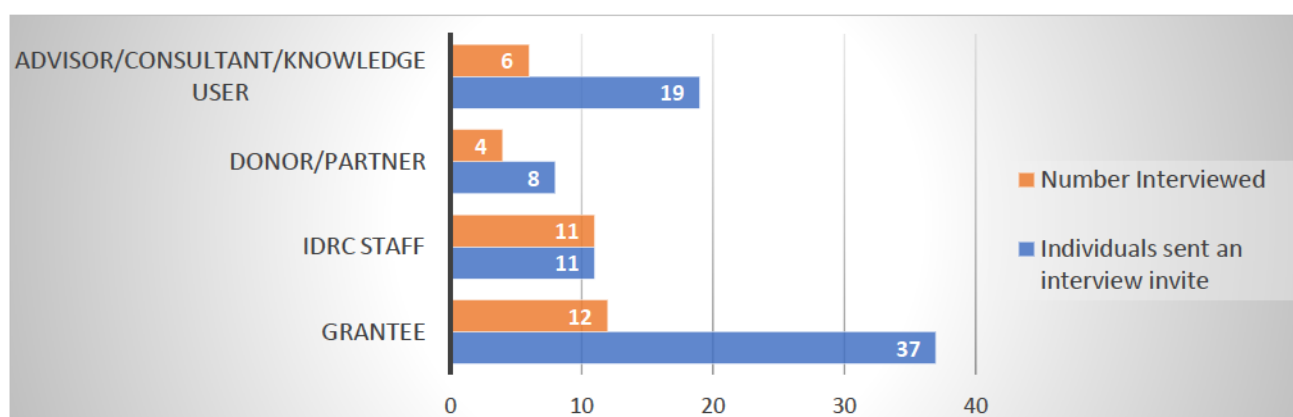
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Figure 2. Overview of Key Informant Interviewees



A preliminary coding dictionary was derived from the evaluation questions based on main themes and categories. To pre-test the coding dictionary, two team members coded the same interview transcript independently using the preliminary coding dictionary and content analysis software (NVivo 12 Mac). Any discrepancies found were resolved, and changes consolidated before proceeding to code the remaining interviews.

Landscape Assessment: To set the context in which FEH operates, the evaluation team identified relevant peer reviewed literature, policy briefs, past IDRC program evaluations, commissioned reports, and grey literature. This assessment framed the interpretation of results, case studies and recommendations.

Case Studies: Four case studies were developed based on a framework agreed upon by FEH and UofT (see *Annex 1*). The evaluation team drew on findings from the document review, interviews, and the landscape assessment. A standardized template was developed to guide the drafting of case studies (also in *Annex 1*).

Analysis: The evaluation team reviewed program-level and then project-level documents (separate extraction tools used for each type of documentation- see *Table 1*), coded data from interviews in NVivo using the coding dictionary and findings from the landscape assessment. Evaluation questions (EQs) were divided amongst team members who worked in pairs, and findings compared and consolidated to address all evaluation questions, allowing for robust triangulation and consistency of interpretations and associated program recommendations. Although not part of the evaluation questions, UofT was asked to provide insight on the knowledge, monitoring and evaluation aspects of the FEH program.

Presentation of Preliminary Findings: Given the participatory nature of this evaluation, a second face-to-face workshop between UofT and FEH staff took place on July 25th and 26th 2019 to present preliminary findings and emerging recommendations (EQ6) for initial feedback and sense-making with FEH Program staff and IDRC's Vice President of Programs.

Challenges and Limitations: The evaluation team encountered a few challenges and also acknowledges some limitations with this program evaluation:

- Variation and Volume of Project-Level Documentation: There was variation in project-level documentation corresponding to the stage in the project's lifecycle, and in program requirements across components, geographies and time. The volume of project-level documentation and diversity of information and data to analyze for assessment of EQ4 and EQ5 (i.e. contributions in various "spheres" that FEH made to influence/effect policy/practice, enhance research capacity, and generate new knowledge; and the influence of the five strategic issues) demanded considerably more

time than initially anticipated. As a result, a monitoring and evaluation section on monitoring and evaluation was added to this report.

- Limited Usability of *Trackify*: The incompleteness and partial implementation of IDRC's *Trackify* database also posed challenges. With its adoption at the mid-point of FEH's program cycle, the inclusion of data from projects funded prior to the start of FEH was prioritized in *Trackify*. At the time of this evaluation, the *Trackify* database did not yet include projects allocated during FEH (representing 31 of the 43 sampled projects).
- Overarching Framework Lacking: The evaluation approach could not be guided by a single, overarching and integrative framework across all three thematic aims of FEH, since the contemporary program was created through the merging of two prior and separate programs. The conduct of this evaluation was complicated by the lack of clear definitions of the five strategic issues and inconsistencies between program- and project-level monitoring data and indicators.
- Sampling Bias and Response Rate from Key Informants: The interviewees provided by the IDRC may have introduced sampling bias because most listed had been involved in teams receiving some form of financial support from the IDRC (as a consultant, partner or grantee). Although a reasonable response rate was still achieved, the breadth achieved by interviewee category was also limited due to the timing of this evaluation during the summer months and competing priorities of those contacted.

Despite challenges faced, the evaluation team feels confident that they were able to assess and make recommendations at program-level given the documentation provided and the coverage, breadth and representative split of key informants across all three categories. While there were some inconsistencies in what different evaluation team members extracted from program- and project-level documentation, consistent and regular team-wide discussions aimed to mitigate this potential variability.

Program-level findings

Each of the six evaluation questions are answered below. The first section tackles the first three questions about FEH's strategy, and second section summarizes the evidence related to the remaining three evaluation questions, including knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation.

1) FEH Strategy (EQ 1-3)

This first section reports headline findings on the strengths, challenges and opportunities based on how well the program has done to learn from previous work (EQ3), how well it has implemented a strategic body of research programming in the identified thematic areas of programming given the context, risks and opportunities that emerged over the period (EQ1). The integration of the five strategic issues was then analysed (EQ2). IDRC's objectives are further described under the scale and partnership sections.

Strengths

- IDRC's key corporate strategy objectives for 2015-2020 were well addressed through the FEH program;
- Lessons from previous programs (Ecohealth and NCDP) were intentionally integrated across FEH's strategy;
- FEH team drew on complementary expertise across FEH thematic aims and objectives during this period;
- FEH is a recognized thought leader in building the field of food systems research;
- FEH's field building approach is relevant and adapted to differences in regional contexts;
- There is strong evidence of meaningful integration of Gender and Southern Leadership in FEH programming;
- South-to-South collaboration is well supported by FEH through a range of modalities (e.g. communities of practice, research networks), resulting in high levels of autonomy and ownership in the Global South.

Challenges/Opportunities

- Diverse and increasingly fragmented programming challenges program coherence;
- Limited evidence of meaningful integration and operationalization of equity and environmental sustainability in current programming;
- Greater strategic focus is needed to guide partnership development and maximize programmatic impact;
- Consistent definitions and indicators are needed to clarify working at scale vs. scaling up vs. scaling out;
- South-to-South collaboration could be further emphasized, including greater North/South collaborative efforts.

Overall, there is strong evidence of alignment of FEH's diverse programming with IDRC's objectives, and intentional integration of lessons learned from previous programs (EcoHealth and NCDP) across the FEH strategy. The program has deliberately capitalized on these lessons across multiple themes of programming; however, there is still scope for greater synergy to be realized. Specifically, we assert that the program's coherence has been, and continues to be, challenged; and this has implications for systematically building the field of food systems research – an area that holds great potential for demonstrating thought leadership as a research funder. Consequently, the FEH team's ability to meaningfully and comprehensively integrate all five strategic issues into programming is being diluted in some areas. For example, some issues (e.g. Gender, Scale and Southern Leadership) are well-addressed while others (e.g. Equity, Environmental Sustainability) are less so. The program has engaged in several parallel and co-funding arrangements and alignment of agendas with other donor entities and organizations. However, the transaction costs of these partnering activities also tax the human resources needed to develop and sustain meaningful partnerships. These competing interests and different points of entry for partnerships stem in part from the program's multiple origins as described below.

Program origins

By merging two previous IDRC programs at the beginning of 2015 (NCDP and EcoHealth), the knowledge, skills, experience and networks from these programs were brought together to form FEH. We found evidence in documents and from key informants that this merger helped to leverage a substantive capacity for systems thinking, with some consideration given to environmental sustainability and health-environment linkages. It is also credited with the strong programmatic focus on policy influence including fiscal policy measures, and ongoing attention to the population level determinants of health (FEH Program documents and key informants). There has been direct uptake of the NCDP program evaluation recommendation to extend the emphasis on policy influence. A key example is the hiring of a FEH Senior Program Specialist with an economics background to promote research on the use and impact of fiscal policy tools and concepts on the economic determinants of health. This “strong economic flavour” relating to fiscal policies and economic analyses has been further evident across FEH programming (see *Annex 1- SSB and non-fiscal policies Case Studies*).

Lessons learned, for example in systems thinking and the focus on environmental health from EcoHealth, provide scope for realizing greater synergy and create new avenues for innovative research programming as illustrated by this quote: *“Interplay between food, environment and health [...] allows [...] us to see the relationships and that’s precisely what we’re being asked to do between food and consumption, agriculture and food, [...] that food has something to do with agriculture and agriculture has something to do with food”* (Grantee).

We also found evidence of diverse and increasingly fragmented programming, which may present challenges for understanding what the collective impact of the FEH investment has been, and for synthesizing what body of evidence has been generated as a result. Without clear and explicit targets for the FEH strategy, it can be difficult to capitalize on the learning from this heterogeneity in programming, and also have a coherent programming narrative. The ability to maintain coherence is further exacerbated when pressures to seize historic and emerging opportunities, such as in ID, would pull FEH staff in multiple directions: *“the rapid responsive nature [coupled with the] corporate pressures to undertake infectious disease programming due to partnership benefits to the organization as a whole and not related to program coherence, or relevance or priority as a global health issue; and the overall lack of a sense of direction for the portfolio were all challenges that emerged during this program cycle”* (Bell & Thorsrterinsdottir, 2019). However, without a skilled program team that is multi-disciplinary, multi-cultural, and has multi-regional experiences, programming would have been less effective. The team includes *“good generalist capacities in [FEH], and a lot of it comes from the previous expertise from the EcoHealth and NCD prevention programs”* (IDRC staff).

From an external perspective, the real strength of FEH is that the team includes *“program officers who are researchers and understand research”* (Advisor/Consultant/Knowledge User).

From our perspective, program diversity has also been harnessed by this expert team. The program’s structure by design of being involved in more than one theme has facilitated cross-learning among team members and helped to achieve some level of program coherence. We suggest that the FEH staff’s current mix of disciplines and skills be further assessed to determine whether it is well-equipped to continue to manage such diverse programming for the time being. For example, one gap identified by a key informant was the lack of an individual with expertise in legal and regulatory frameworks.

Based on our assessment, the lack of staff time to build a single, more integrated and targeted field building agenda for FEH has also challenged program coherence. Senior management has *“directed new potential opportunities our way whenever it came to infectious diseases. So much of our time and attention was directed to other efforts instead of only the development of the food systems work [...] We were spread quite thin and were not as able as we might have been to just focus on food systems because the decision-making power was not always just within the team”* (IDRC staff).

According to the literature, a well-defined vision of what is meant by a ‘field’, and a clear timeframe and unit for measuring a field’s impact are needed to achieve success (Edwards et al., 2019). Concerted and deliberate action and alignment of agendas are essential. We found strong indications that without a clearly defined field-building strategy for FEH, these programming origins and other corporately driven influences will continue to challenge the program’s ability to enable strategic programming.

In sum, the FEH program’s diverse origins have impacted its ability to implement a strategic and coherent body of research programming. FEH is delivering on three distinct programming areas, with little or no planned synergy between themes, making it more difficult for the program to define and communicate its identity, actual value and “brand”. Our assessment of program documentation and key informant data confirms that the program remains, as illustrated by this quote:

“Very broadly spread in terms of themes, sort of mini-programs within programs [...] As a result the program is beginning to pull together a narrative of impact but it’s not easy for it to point to this” (IDRC staff).

Field Building

We found that the FEH program is becoming an increasingly recognized thought leader in building the field of food systems research and that its field building (FB) approach is relevant and adapted to differences in regional contexts (FEH Program documents and key informants). However, the program could be more deliberate and focused in its strategy to FB. A recent literature review (conducted for another research funder but with relevance to this evaluation) has highlighted three changes to the approach taken by research funding agencies to build fields of research. These include research capacity building with a systems orientation, a focus on interdisciplinarity, and a problem-orientation. The building of networks, alliances and other mechanisms that connect different actors, sectors and organizations to facilitate knowledge exchange and uptake for sustained impact are also gaining greater attention (Edwards et al., 2019).

The FEH program is becoming an increasingly recognized thought leader in building the field of food systems research and that its field building approach is relevant and adapted to differences in regional contexts.

We found evidence that the IDRC (and the FEH program) have a long history in building fields of research, which are congruent with these insights from the literature, that the program is acting on previous evaluation recommendations, and is currently taking the learnings from past FB efforts to develop networks and South-to-South collaborations. For instance, the EcoHealth Evaluation recommended that the program maintain focus on the FB objective as it is gaining strength in LAC, emerging in Asia, and embryonic in Africa as continued growth needs more time and support. There is evidence of *“intentional efforts to bring in people just to grow the field because not a lot of people work on NCD prevention. [FEH] had an intention to bring people in LMIC that already have strong skills, economical skills, social analysis skills [in their countries] that can be applied to this topic so they developed their capacity to work on these issues [...] and] to actually join up these efforts”* (IDRC staff).

We contend that FEH’s FB efforts are also garnering the attention of grantees and other funders, which contributes to the program’s legitimacy as a thought leader in this field while also raising questions of longer-term sustainability. Several researchers and granting organizations appreciated the way and extent to which FEH is building fields of research, and “being on the frontier” where not a lot of funders are in the NCD space; particularly with respect to funding globally relevant food systems research into tax legislation, which is underdeveloped across the globe (IDRC staff). Relating to the achievement of SDG target 3.4 (to reduce by one-third pre-mature mortality from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) through prevention and treatment), *“I do not think the field of NCD and food systems would continue to thrive without IDRC/FEH investments”*

(Advisor/Consultant/Knowledge User). FEH's "uniqueness of funding projects targeting the intersections of food, health and environment compared to other donor agencies" was highly valued.

In our estimation, the niche occupied by the program in NCD prevention and food systems research, is recognized, as echoed by several grantees. Yet, there are questions about how sustainable this is to be dependent on the FEH program for ongoing support:

"These are areas that from a research perspective here [...] are not very supported I would say. So, in our case it would have been impossible, that's the truth" (Grantee). In the long term, "it should not just be coming from one international body to sustain FEH research [...] governments should recognize the importance of FEH and they should support local researchers, they need to" (Grantee).

Another hallmark of the program's FB approach (which is, in our view, also a measure of IDRC's overall approach) is the mix, structure and flexibility of funding modalities. The program deploys these modalities strategically to respond to emerging health priorities in LMICs, develop research capacity in academic and civil organizations, and foster collaboration across disciplines and regions. Through this flexible approach, FEH has capitalized on political windows/opportunities as they arise in a country – an approach appreciated by several grantees: *"one of our challenges is the process of connecting the research timing with the political timing and I think IDRC has a very good flexibility to understand that these processes are not always happening at the same time or when we need it" (Grantee).*

Sensitivity to regional differences

There is evidence of the program's flexible FB approach in deploying tailored regional strategies that match where the field is during each stage of development.

The focus on improving the sensitivity of these strategies to differences in regional contexts emerged, in response to the EcoHealth Evaluation, recommending that FEH also customize and adapt FB strategies to regional contexts rather than take 'a cookie cutter' approach.

This tailored approach, coupled with limited resources and other pressures on programming discussed earlier, can have unintended consequences. It can result in trade-offs in terms of program visibility, though the program's presence may no longer be required to the same degree (which we contend can have positive effects for strengthening Southern Leadership – discussed later). While the field of research is becoming established in Latin America, the Caribbean and South Africa where capacities are strongest, we found evidence that the program has strengthened inter-regional collaboration in research and policy. In regions like in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, we observed that the field was less well-developed, and as a result, FEH looked to strengthen multi-country, multi-institutional research with leadership and support from a few strong public health research institutions in South Africa, Kenya, and Lebanon (with a RP focusing on waterpipes' use for example).

"In Latin America, they're a strong critical mass, they're now connecting with other, leading the conversations in their country and even globally, they're seen as experts [...] So at that point, we need to expand our work in Western Africa and in Asia because these researchers are doing very well. The trade-off there is [...] that we've done so much so we're seen as a leader in that so if we step back now we lose the visibility that we've gotten by leading this field [...] We might lose the credit that we get but maybe we're not as needed anymore" (IDRC Staff).

FEH's strategic approach to FB also accounts for the regional differences in stages of development. Figure 3 provides a visual demonstration of FEH's intentions per region and strong focus on building the field of FS, based on our assessment of the program's regional strategies using a framework described in Di Ruggiero et al. (2017). This FB framework highlights the need for concerted multi-level action to build awareness and support for a new field. Such action should *"simultaneously involve the development of standards and exemplars, a knowledge base of credible, policy-oriented and action-oriented evidence that synthesises*

conclusions across multiple studies, influential scientific leadership by a core cadre, broad-based support among key influencers, and organised funding streams” (Di Ruggiero et al., 2017).

Without any current metrics to measure performance of FB across FEH programming and potentially connections between this FB and substantive improvements in food policy/health, the evaluation team asserts that this should become a greater priority for FEH’s monitoring and evaluation moving forward. Relatedly, this call for FB-type metrics was echoed by stakeholders at a recent IDRC consultation to inform its strategic plan (Di Ruggiero & Sauveplane-Stirling, 2019). Examples included” “Changes in global attention by funders and multilateral organizations on hitherto neglected issues; and on Thought leaders/research leaders with local and global recognition in an area or field developed”.

Challenges in FB and measuring its impact are, however, not unique to this program. When a field of research is emerging, it is challenging to demonstrate ‘bench strength’ as evidenced by sufficient capacity, demand for research and its use, a constituency of interested stakeholders, as well as the appropriate timeframe for measuring FB outcomes (Edwards et al., 2019). Given the program’s current and past FB experience, however, the program could be more deliberate and focused in its strategy to FB in part to strive for greater program coherence. It is also well positioned to further contribute to the relatively limited FB literature (especially from a research funder’s perspective) by assessing its impact, while documenting the challenges with FB and identifying the leverage points for enabling success (Edwards et al., 2019).

The program could be more deliberate and focused in its strategy to FB in part to strive for greater program coherence. It is also well positioned to further contribute to the relatively limited FB literature by assessing its impact, while documenting the challenges with FB and identifying the leverage points for enabling success.

Figure 3. Field Building Based on Regional Strategies with Contribution Highlights

Middle East and Northern Africa

Knowledge Base

Assessment of the state of research and knowledge on NCDs prevention and healthy diets by different multidisciplinary teams in the region.

Enabling Environment

Agenda setting workshop in Lebanon allowing presentation of results from the FHS regional reviews as background to an agenda setting exercise and presentation of FEH programming.

Leadership

Focus on assembling a first cohort of up to 6 multidisciplinary teams across MENA carrying out research (consortia and exploratory) through research projects

Research Capacity

Creation of state of research and knowledge syntheses on food-related NCD prevention that guides policy, advocacy and community-based interventions. Incorporation of gender equity in healthy diets and NCD prevention.

Knowledge Base

Further scoping activities of the food systems research landscape (environmental scans and literature reviews) given that the field of food systems research is underdeveloped in South and Southeast Asia.

Enabling Environment

Regional consultation workshops creating environment of knowledge- sharing and networking for grantees.

Leadership

Scoping activities, call for proposals, and regional workshops expected to result in the development and validation of a food systems research agenda which meets local priorities and capacities.

Research Capacity

Collaborations with more established organizations in food systems, nutrition and NCDs to identify concept notes and research champions, & expand contacts and networks.

Asia



Latin America and the Caribbean

Knowledge Base

Stronger community of practice to extend knowledge base being at a relatively advanced stage of food systems research.

Enabling Environment

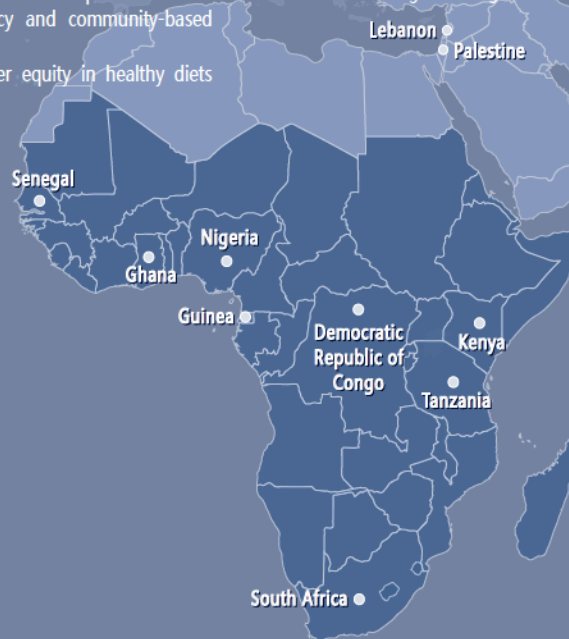
Regional workshop enabling networking and building of relationships among participants, and opportunity to explore new collaborative approaches to advance field of food systems.

Leadership

Regional workshop, 5 discussion papers, and collaborative regional Chairs help strengthen leadership in the global South, convening multidisciplinary teams to develop future programming.

Research Capacity

Research chairs supporting field building, while simultaneously generating new research and strengthening leadership of the region in the field. Support to multi-country and multi-actor collaborations.



Sub-Saharan Africa

Knowledge Base

Focus on building & growing food systems research given that the study of food systems in the prevention of diet- related NCDs is a new and emerging field.

Enabling Environment

Meeting in Cape Town enabling Latin American and Asian researchers to share their experiences in food systems research with interested African researchers. This resulted in interest of African participants to collaborate with Latin American counterparts on projects.

Leadership

Identification of a select group of "catalyst countries" that have the research capacity and networking in place to produce high-quality results and outcomes.

Research Capacity

Considerations around the adoption of a "research chair" model and provision of core support to a select group of research institutions. Discussions with existing partnerships and with other IDRC programs and external stakeholders to identify qualified researchers and institutions .

- FEH Funding Recipient
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Middle East and Northern Africa
- Asia

Strategic Programming Issues

In this next section, we examine how and how well the FEH program integrated the five identified strategic issues (EQ2). These include: Scale, Gender and Equity, Partnerships, Southern Leadership and Environmental Sustainability.

Scale

The literature on scaling up effective interventions is growing as researchers and implementers seek to further contribute to population health improvements. There are several challenges relating to the lack of capacity and resources needed for scale-up; insufficient attention to the socio-political and fiscal context, to the vested interests of actors, sustainability at the outset of a project; lack of attention to the demand side of scale-up; and, undue emphasis on vertical rather than horizontal scaling of innovations (Edwards, 2015; Yamey, 2012). However, much of this literature is from the perspective of researchers testing and evaluating health interventions, attempting to bring them to scale, and less so from the role of a research funder seeking to support research to inform scale and scalability. Our assessment of the FEH program raised the following questions about scale: why it is important to scale? What evidence or forms of knowledge are being scaled? What are the enabling conditions for scale (as a funder)?

FEH is experimenting with different approaches to support scale in its programming – this includes working at scale, scaling up of specific interventions, tools and methods; and scaling evidence (through research and support for communities of practice and with other actors) to influence policy.

However, it is less clear how FEH is systematically drawing out lessons learned (with a few exceptions) from these investments about what to scale, why scale, and under what conditions to scale. Below we describe the program's approaches to scale, challenges with different approaches and implications for sustainability. We further contend that this level of experimentation with 'scale' is a FEH strength that needs to be further harnessed and learned from.

There is evidence that the program is being strategic in addressing the issue of *working at scale* (FEH Program documents and key informants). FEH is focussing deliberately on a few projects with the greatest potential for scalability. This programmatic thrust clearly builds on lessons learned from EcoHealth and NCDP, where its *larger* projects demonstrated that scaling can produce positive policy outcomes. In line with the program's tailored FB approach, there is also evidence of strategically supporting smaller research projects, particularly in emerging areas of new knowledge. An illustrative example is the *"work on Chagas disease in Central America [with namely IPCAM, DNDi, National Chagas control programs, Universities] that's scaling up, that was intended to scale up [...] and other infectious diseases (examples) where we were trying to exploit the legacies of EcoHealth to try and scale up interventions [...] but the work on food systems and food policy was by its nature at scale"* (IDRC staff).

Highlights from non-fiscal policy Case Study:

FEH has contributed to the scaling of evidence on non-fiscal food policy through a range of knowledge dissemination mechanisms, such as informational and educational material, published reports and academic manuscripts, and local and international meetings and conferences. For example, the findings from non-fiscal food policy research in Argentina and Chile has been disseminated locally and internationally through several published manuscripts (that describe the effects of regulations on purchase and consumption behaviours, and lessons learned in terms of policy development and implementation), as well as over 30 technical meetings with national governments across the world (involving 17 countries), and national and international civil society organizations. An example of working at scale comes from a project in Brazil, through which the Brazil INFORMAS has been an important driver for creating policies, as well as justifying existing ones, both nationally (e.g. building on the Brazilian Dietary Guidelines) and in other countries.

FEH has supported the scaling of evidence-based, effective and proven interventions for improved diets and disease prevention, which have led to legislation with the potential for significantly reducing disease risk to millions of people globally. For RPs in ID, this has included the Canadian Ebola vaccine pending licensing and approval by international regulators, currently only used under exceptional conditions (public health emergencies), and the protection of 5 million people at risk of Chagas disease in Central America. FEH has been a vehicle for facilitating a multi-departmental Canadian response— two key examples of this flexible collaborative approach include VSV-Ebola vaccine clinical trials with Canadian Government partners and Zika research co-funded with CIHR. Through the ID Call for Proposals (specifically Joint Programming Initiative on Antimicrobial Resistance (JPIAMR) and the role of small business in Aedes control technologies), FEH also aimed to scale the global use of tools, technologies and methods, including their use in LMIC settings. Projects in response to these 2 calls for proposals are either in development (JPIAMR) or have recently started (Aedes Call). In TC, FEH supported capacity building within the MENA region to expand the work done on water pipes and hookah use. Through this funding, the tobacco control research group at the American University in Beirut moved forward on intervention research about the use of water pipes, research that contributed to global awareness of hookah use. Support for research projects on adapting and scaling the evidence on SSB provide other examples – see highlights below from *Annex 1- SSB Case Study*.

Another scaling approach of FEH is to support research to influence national public policy. With the influx of CRUK- IDRC or GACD calls for projects on the impact of tobacco pricing and packaging strategies in middle- income countries, with in- depth economic analyses aimed at informing tax policy developments across multiple countries and regions. This involves research on taxation of harmful highly processed foods and drinks as seen in the RP *Assessment of the Burdens of Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Consumption in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Scaling up of evidence within national food guides was also observed in Brazil's RP on *Overcoming Obstacles to Adoption of Brazil's National Dietary Guidelines*. Strides in promoting changes in advertising and marketing regulations was particularly seen in the work on *Television Food Advertising to Children in Argentina*, resulting in large scale national and internal dissemination of results and raised awareness of the issue amongst policy makers and stakeholders. Another example of FEH's scaling approach is demonstrated within the RP in Argentina, ultimately raising awareness and starting a policy dialogue to implement public policies on SSB in LAC- see *Annex 1- SSB Case Study*.

Highlights from SSB Case Study:

We found that the FEH program has contributed to the scaling of evidence on SSBs by supporting contextually-relevant research on taxation policy models, creating supportive environments through stakeholder engagement, building on previous evidence on the relationship between SSBs and diet related NCD risk. This evidence base provided the necessary justifications for policy change, and the knowledge base that can help other countries in the same regions (e.g., SSA & LAC). Project #108646 in LAC generated evidence on the economic and population health burdens from the consumption of SSBs in four countries and designed a tool that will be applicable at the scale of the whole region in future research efforts. FEH also pursued research on the taxation of highly processed beverages to guide public policy interventions with the aim for national uptake and ultimately an improvement in population health. For example, in South Africa, the project will continue to build on PRICELESS team's policy win by generating evidence on the economic impacts, evaluation and expansion of SSB policies. This project illustrates the FEH program's approach to scaling evidence. In so doing, it also holds agenda setting potential in influencing leadership and action by other SSA researchers as well as international organizations and other country governments.

FEH has enabled regional communities of practice within the fields of nutrition and public health, and built bridges between researchers and other actors, in order to shape policy and extend reach to a larger number of people - all in an effort to scale knowledge.

This approach in our view holds great potential in that it has a multiplier effect that can mobilize and facilitate knowledge uptake. This is an important insight from the program's approach to scale, which merits further evaluation, a finding that was echoed in other consultations, encouraging IDRC to further innovate in how it measures research quality and related dimensions such as scale (Di Ruggiero & Sauveplane-Stirling, 2019). For example, 40% of the sampled projects from MENA were aimed at achieving impact at scale through knowledge dissemination/exchange and engagement of public health and corporate, public policy actors, public and private school authorities, and civil society.

The strategic emphasis placed on knowledge exchange and dissemination with expected project outputs including workshops, news articles, policy briefs, and social media posts are direct evidence of the program's deliberate approach to encourage the scaling of knowledge to reach different audiences and encourage use. Integrating network and community building and knowledge uptake strategies aimed at different audiences is another learning to gain from the program's approach to scale -see highlights above from *Annex 1- SSB Case Study*. Another example of amplifying scale is through the formation of partners and alliances. Of note, a regional consortium of institutions in 5 countries helped to introduce and strengthen salt reduction policies in LAC. This comes from a realization from the program that *"the only way that we can really go to scale ever is by collaborating with others [...] I really don't think there's a lot of examples where we have done it on our own without partners"* (IDRC staff).

Our evaluation identified some tensions across data sources reviewed on the program's granting approach to scale, raising issues about longer-term access to funding and overall project sustainability. Although a research project (RP) can start with funding from FEH, it is challenging for grantees to secure additional funds from other sources to scale up a project unless there are differences in the research design (something innovative). In response, the Centre supported grantees in how to better design grant proposals about scale: *"we feel that we can openly discuss with them [...], how this grant can be used to get another grant from IDRC but also from other funding sources. We have received a lot of support [...] during the process [...] in accommodating changes on the scale, on the budget, on the planning of the project"* (Grantee). There is also an obvious disconnect between the type of scaling the IDRC (and the FEH program) is expecting and funding versus the type of scaling researchers are interested in pursuing. This finding raises questions for the FEH program about what approach and mix of modalities to use going forward to create the enabling conditions for scale.

Overall, evidence shows that the concept of scale has been well operationalized within FEH programming. However, we found that scale is interpreted differently across analyzed data sources, which may challenge the program's ability to measure how well it is doing to achieve scale. A clearer articulation of what the program means by scale is recommended considering *"what is the most appropriate scale for this particular kind of issue and this kind of project"* (Advisor/Consultant/Knowledge User). While there is no evidence of an agreed upon definition of what scale means across the IDRC, *"there's been a lot of work done to try and describe it whether it's been scaling up, scaling out, at scale. We've had to make the case, to get recognition for the work that we do which is essentially at scale rather than necessarily scaling up"* (IDRC staff).

In addition to clarity on what the program means by scale, program learnings could be better and systematically documented and harnessed to inform future investments in scale.

The program should consider what is the desired mix of funding modalities to support scale, the approach to building networks and partnerships for scale, in addition to lessons on what to scale (e.g. evidence about policy interventions). While difficult to measure scale, including what reach and impact scaling efforts have (i.e. number of policies and how to extrapolate impact on a population), and that can be attributed to FEH (particularly in the eyes of senior management and board members as noted by key informants), there is still room to systematically draw learnings around scaling. The program could develop a more explicit scaling strategy that guides initial design and planning of projects to measure impact of scaling across FEH investments.

Gender and Equity

Attention to gender in research, policy and practice has gained considerable momentum globally, including here in Canada through the federal government's Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP). IDRC's mandate aims at scaling impact with a core commitment to improve gender equality and empower women and girls across all its programming. Gender responsiveness is identified as a strategic domain in IDRC's corporate evaluation approach to measuring research quality³ (Ofir et al., 2016). The global and institutional context is therefore conducive to addressing gender -see highlights below from *Annex 1- Gender and Equity Case Study*.

Highlights from Gender and Equity Case Study:

Based on our document analysis, we found some evidence that the program's effort to encourage the integration of gender in research is making a difference. FEH monitors the extent of gender integration within projects on a continuum ranging from gender-blind, to gender aware, gender sensitive and gender responsive. For example, project #108163 in Bangladesh deliberately focused on female recruitment, in terms of both participants and members of the research team. The PIs recognized the inequities existing in Bangladesh, where 32% of women above 35 suffered from hypertension compared to 19% of men, with similar distributions seen in ethnic minorities. Within the methodology of the study, special attention was given to measuring dimensions such as gender and ethnicity in population surveys, including the inequitable distribution of NCDs among genders, socioeconomic groups, and ethnicities. The majority of participants within this study were women, and female recruitment on the research team was emphasized, with a gender specialist sitting on the research team. Therefore, this project clearly incorporates the analysis of sex- disaggregated data and involves gender specialists in the research process, to ensure gender considerations are effectively carried out throughout the project. Most FEH projects are still at the gender aware and gender sensitive stage. This is to be expected as the FEH program does not set out as a primary objective for research projects to be gender transformative.

We learned from some key informants that the FEH program is considered one of the leaders within the Centre in this regard, which is further corroborated by evidence from our review of FEH program documents. While research quality was not part of the scope for this evaluation, the FEH program is well-positioned to determine how its gender sensitive strategy is actually influencing the quality of research it funds moving forward.

Our findings demonstrate that FEH is taking an iterative and reflective approach to systematically address gender, building on "what has worked and what was exposed as a weakness in the past", to ensure that no aspect of programming is gender blind.

The emphasis on gender is also in direct response to past evaluation recommendations (EcoHealth), which identified it as a gap. There is evidence that the current program is tackling the complexities of gender across its programming - *"with respect to power dynamics, with respect to larger social norms, informal and formal structures and processes, [...] and [...] to think just beyond that disaggregated lens"* (IDRC staff). It is integrating gender equity in its calls for proposals, and regional strategies, sponsoring capacity building workshops for researchers to help them meaningfully integrate gender equity dimensions in their research, as well as supporting policy-relevant research that integrates gender using broader "systems orientation" (a return to its EcoHealth programming roots) : *"In the earlier programs, [...] it was a more simplistic understanding of gender but it certainly didn't delve into and try to unpack policy questions or the broader systems orientation around gender as much as we're doing in our current food systems work"* (IDRC staff).

³ As a part of Research Legitimacy, which considers the extent to which research results are produced by a process that took account of the concerns and insights of relevant stakeholders, was deemed procedurally fair and based on the values, concerns and perspectives of that audience. Legitimacy deals primarily with who participated and who did not; the process for making choices; how information was produced, vetted and disseminated; how well knowledge was localized, and if it respected local traditions and knowledge systems. This dimension also includes a sub-dimension that asks the assessor to consider the potentially negative consequences and outcomes for populations affected by the research, gender-responsiveness, inclusiveness of vulnerable populations, and engagement with local knowledge.

Overall, there is evidence of successful incorporation of gender within FEH programming with gender-responsive solutions and gender-equitable conditions for the promotion of healthy food systems. There is also strong integration of gender in the research design, implementation and intended outcomes of funded projects across the programming cycle (see excerpt from *Annex 1 – Gender and Equity Case Study*).

Highlights from Gender and Equity Case Study:

One example of gender and equity incorporation within the FEH program is observed through project #108180 in Chile, which focused on equity dimensions in its study methodology. This project looked at the impact of food policy interventions on the diets of children and adolescents from low- and middle- income families, along with perceptions and attitudes of mothers towards food regulations. This project specifically recruited children and mothers from lower, middle, and upper socio-economic strata to more broadly understand the differential effects of taxing and regulation on different sub-populations. Similarly, in project #108179 in Argentina, the research team explored gender differences in consumer's perceptions of fruit and vegetable consumption, with an emphasis on participants from vulnerable job sectors. Not only was sex- disaggregated data collected in the project, but also participants' education and socio-economic status to account for both gender

Gender mainstreaming in research programming is not without its difficulties. Challenges observed from our review of documents and analysis of interview data include: grantee's research capacity to consider gender dimensions of their research problem at the beginning of a project and ability to translate these dimensions into measurement approaches and analyses of research findings, meaningful integration of gender and equity in the measurement of research, research capacity and policy outcomes, and how to further operationalize gender and equity beyond analyses that examine power relations and degrees of vulnerability experienced by sub-populations across research projects. This is consistent from challenges from the program-level commissioned reports that highlighted more opportunities to understand and strengthen the gender dimension of research, particularly with PIs are refining their methodological approaches (Gender at Work, 2018).

"Gender is like looking at accounting, it's something you have to do every month. It's not something you do once, and you're done with it" (Advisor/Consultant/Knowledge User).

That said, there is good evidence of meaningful integration of gender equity in FEH programming; however, the program's intersections with equity and social determinants of health are not well-addressed. Although we identified the lack of explicit attention to equity as an overall programming gap, there is some work underway (e.g. Latin America): *"we put a lot of emphasis more on gender equity but not as much on other social determinants of food systems but in practice I think that many of the projects are looking into the data [...] being split in between social levels of education [...] Latin America is the region with higher regions of social inequity"* (IDRC staff). The program should put more emphasis on addressing equity separately from gender moving forward.

Partnerships

During the period, IDRC's corporate strategy emphasized growing its partnership base and brokering new relationships. FEH has spent a significant amount of time and effort to secure bi-lateral and multi-donor partnerships (formal and informal), and these relationships have had some influence on how the program (and the Centre) was perceived by other donors and on FEH programming. We found further evidence that the Centre and its FEH program are viewed as a partner of choice (FEH Program documents and key informants). Their approach to partnering, including parallel and co-funding models and alignment of partner agendas, the expertise they bring to partnerships and their commitment to LMICs were highly valued by other donors. The program is seen to bring legitimacy and to influence otherwise neglected research agendas. We also found evidence that the program has partnered effectively with the private sector (particularly within its ID thematic aim), which leveraged more funds and increased the distribution of products while contributing to the Centre's learning on the potential conflicts of interest that can arise. However, these efforts have been challenging – in terms of securing funding for neglected areas such as NCD and food systems research, human resources (including the **unmeasured opportunity cost** of partnership efforts), and the transactional costs related to relationship building that doesn't translate into co-funding arrangements. While we assert that the program has been a strategic partner and partner of choice, its efforts could be more effective with a guiding partnership strategy that includes clear measurable outcomes.

Partner of choice

A key driver to securing partnerships is how the IDRC and in particular the FEH program has been viewed as a partner of choice with *complementary priorities and common principles*. Alignment of common principles with other funders do exist:

"common principles with IDRC in [...] building research capacity in LMIC and [...] ensuring that the LMIC leaders have a leadership role including management of finances, [...] something that we're just not able to do directly given [our] mandate [...] so we highly value that piece of our relationship with IDRC. [...] Scientific excellence [...] including a shared interest in not just the knowledge creation aspect but also ensuring that the research is going beyond the research community. An easy relationship overall between our organizations and it's really fertile ground for partnership I would say when you have that very solid base to build on" (Donor/Partner).

From the perspectives of partners/donors, the IDRC and the FEH program also bring legitimacy and attention and influence research agendas through their approach to field building. Although this evaluation is not intended to measure research quality, this finding illustrates FEH's "research legitimacy" as defined by RQ+ (Ofir et al., 2016). Despite being *"one of the few funders in this [FS] space"*, other donors are aware of IDRC and their previous work in related NCD topic areas like TC and admire their work in it. Partnerships with FEH are critical *"in terms of having impact not just in the field but to move that field forward and get it on agendas of folks who are resourced enough to do something about it [...]"* In this respect, *I think they've done brilliantly"* (IDRC staff).

As one of the few funders supporting NCD and food systems research, their niche focus is highly valued.

"We're really excited that they were working in the food [policy] space as well. So I think that, the fact that they're really one of the only funders in the space, coupled with the fact that we invest in common geographies in some of those places common organizations just meant that our paths were crossing and it just made sense to talk and collaborate wherever we could just to ensure we're not duplicating efforts and rally maximizing our respective investments" (Donor/Partner).

FEH has also worked with a platform of donors (European and non-European science funding agencies) to tackle anti-microbial resistance (AMR) through targeted research calls aimed at LMICs. This example of

working with a transnational consortium of donors gives “the program access to different tables that they have used to further understand how donors are considering (or not) other areas like NCD” (IDRC staff). Their involvement helps amplify their reach and degree of influence.

Approach to partnering

Partnerships have been a key to retaining leadership in the food systems research field. The program’s respectful approach to relationship-building influences how they fund research in LMICs. Their approach to partnering is translated through a range of flexible funding modalities (detailed earlier on), deemed valuable by and highly visible to other donors, because they emphasize a commitment to funding LMIC investigators directly and emphasize long term sustainability. “This is quite a unique feature of IDRC that they have the mechanisms and mandates in place to flow funding directly to LMIC countries that is highly valued [...] and is one of the key reasons that we look to partner with them on our global health initiatives” (Donor/Partner).

The program (and the Centre) are recognized for the technical expertise they bring to donor tables and commitment to partnerships mutually benefitting IDRC and other donors/partners:

“IDRC’s policy-oriented research I would say is very unique in terms of the partners that we [...] work with in the global health side [...] It really added a lot of value to our joint program [...] but also the focus on prevention [...] IDRC has a history of supporting local researchers who have an understanding of the social and political context and can really bring research to nationally relevant policy in the countries in which IDRC is working” (Donor/Partner).

Overall, the FEH program has been a partner choice; however, their ability to partner strategically and effectively is increasingly challenged as they attempt to also build new fields of research like food systems.

Range of partnerships

FEH has been successful in developing a wide range of partnerships including joint funding models (e.g. co-funding, parallel funding) with 35 funding partners.

FEH partnerships have an average 1:4 leverage ratio, including:

- FS – 1:9 with 2 partnerships among 8 funders (\$38 million);
 - ID – 1:6 with 6 partnerships among 26 funders (\$44.5 million);
 - TC – 1:0.36 with 1 partnership among 2 funders (\$7 million);
 - NCD prevention – 1:5 with 2 partnerships among 4 funders (\$38.5 million).
-

One noteworthy example includes the recently approved 3-year project led in collaboration with GAIN that engages the IDRC in a multi-donor partnership. The latter is a \$30 million initiative on Making Markets Work to Improve the Consumption of Nutritious Foods, and work on scalable approaches and policies for strengthening food systems in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, and Kenya that involves public-private partnerships, addressing both demand and supply structures so that the consumption of nutritious foods increases, and food systems are better able to foster and sustain healthier dietary patterns.

The program has made important advances in developing private sector partnerships, particularly within its ID thematic aim but should particularly be recognized for its work in mitigating conflicts of interest and addressing the commercial determinants of health – an area of growing interest in the SDG-related literature (Buse & Hawkes, 2015). A private-public partnership to coordinate an effective response to the Ebola Epidemic in West Africa includes the Government of Canada departments, Canadian researchers along with in-kind funding of \$2.6 million from Merck (an American multinational pharmaceutical company) and the United States Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority to support clinical trials of the Canadian-made Ebola vaccine. This partnership achieved impact at scale by design, where its trials provided the essential data to allow Merck (as the intellectual property rights holder) to proceed with global licensing of the vaccine, with the aim of expanding global access to the vaccine. Another example is the partnership between Welcome

Trust UK and Johnson & Johnson US (another pharmaceutical company) to support training for the World Federation of Science Journalists aimed at improving health and science journalism in emergency and post-outbreak periods of the Ebola crisis in SSA. The program's thought leadership on conflicts of interest and "ethical issues surrounding engagement with the private sector" that arise in partnering should continue to be at the forefront of discussions "with potential private sector partners or even large foundations that do work with specific private sector folks" (IDRC staff).

"IDRC's willingness to explore questions around what constitutes good partnerships in health research and health policy and also to think about the importance of identifying and managing conflict of interest in those contexts [...] is a really important contribution to national and global discussions particularly in the context of partnering for achieving the SDG agenda" (Advisor/Consultant/Knowledge User).

Challenges that arise with partnerships

It is well-established in the literature that NCDs were neglected in the Millennium Development Goals despite mounting evidence of their significant impacts on the health and well-being of individuals and households, health systems and economies.

While the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (which was ratified by member states in 2015) acknowledges more explicitly NCD as a development priority, challenges remain for actors, including civil society and the NCD research community to get and keep NCDs on government agendas.

It is in this context that a research funder like the IDRC (and its FEH program) has had to operate. We were therefore not surprised to learn that it has been very challenging from the perspective of FEH program staff for the program to secure a large partnership in NCD prevention. This reality was further aggravated by pressures from the Centre favoring the co-funding of partnerships – a type of partnership that arises when the IDRC administers the investments from other donor(s): "Part of the external reason for lack of partnership on the NCD prevention front or the food systems front is we're not receiving the attention they deserve [...] It's not understood the role of research in advancing policy and these issues continue to be, or particularly up until now, not regarded as issues for LMIC" (IDRC staff). FEH's continued efforts to build the field of food systems research for the prevention of NCD and to get it on the agendas of national governments and researchers, is in our estimation, admirable in spite of the challenges to securing partnerships.

Increasing the number and strength of partnerships with other funders and global organizations requires a significant amount of time and dedicated support to foster continued relationship-building particularly when multiple stakeholders are engaged. The program continually faces different arrangements and administrative processes, which becomes more difficult when it is acting as both the funder and the implementer trying to secure suitable country-level partners. By establishing an equal footing with potential partners, the process for partnership development may be more effective, particularly in terms of the stewardship of funds as often "we're not managing the funds but we've put our funds in with other donors [...] which doesn't favour IDRC's business model" (IDRC staff).

We also observed an **unmeasured opportunity cost** from partnership efforts: "how at the outset there was this lust I call it for partnership development and everybody just had to devote so much of their time and energy to it and yet we didn't feel capacitated to do so or it was clear where you draw the line" (IDRC staff). Although experience with its precursor programs highlighted the need for increased institutional support for strategic network partnerships, the scattered scope of the current program has made it more difficult to leverage opportunities that build on legacy projects and experiences. This opportunity cost of partnership efforts was particularly evident in ID programming due to unanticipated growth in response to two global public health emergencies, Ebola and Zika:

“opportunity cost in that we’ve had to exploit opportunities for partnerships with other funders who’ve been interested in our work on infectious diseases, wanting us to jump and act on immediate issues whether they be Ebola or Zika or AMR or [...] particularly Ebola where we’ve had to devote our energies and funding to these issues and it’s taken away [...] from our efforts to develop partnerships for impact on the food systems front” (IDRC staff).

We also found evidence that the program has been praised for its significant brokering between internationally acclaimed scientists working on Ebola in both West (2014-2016) and Central Africa (2018) and work on vector borne disease, but this recognition has come at a cost. Seizing an “externality” like Ebola showed a level of responsiveness to the global and institutional (IDRC) context but also required a redirection of funds away from core FEH programming in order, to create the \$1.5 million research Rapid Research Fund for the Ebola Virus Diseases Outbreaks. Similarly with vector borne disease or AMR, *“a decision early on not to pursue our work on [this] within FEH [...] and yet we had to backtrack on that with the opportunity to partner [that came up and] we continued to revisit it and think about, is this the next best opportunity on the ID front? Should we be more active on AMR?” (IDRC staff).*

In summary, lessons learned point to the need to better understand how to achieve and maintain equal footing with partners, and to no longer view partnership efforts as a separate add-on activity. This shift in perspective will help enhance and better integrate the partnership function within FEH moving forward: *“[FEH] staff are so busy and their priority is making sure that the programming is going to roll out as intended [...] and this partnering thing is an add-on. To make it an effective add-on, we need to learn more about it [...] it’s not just to bring in money [...] being well connected to the funder committee just enables all of us to do a better job and I think sometimes we need to just appreciate that a little bit more than we do” (IDRC staff).* To balance opportunism with strategic programming considerations, the evaluation team recommends that a clear partnership strategy with set goals and objectives and metrics be established, coupled with more dedicated resources within FEH to support existing program staff.

Southern Leadership

There is program-level evidence that FEH is building capacity for Southern Leadership, in line with IDRC’s corporate objective to *Build Leaders of Tomorrow* (FEH Program documents and key informants). FEH has facilitated dialogue with and provided constructive and dignified support to LMIC researchers, treating them as *“clients rather than people who are funded”* (Advisor/Consultant/Knowledge User), rather than impose their own agenda. This approach makes researchers feel valued and is resulting in high levels of autonomy, respect and ownership by researchers in the Global South. This finding is corroborated by evidence from recent IDRC stakeholder consultations to inform the organization’s future strategic plan (Di Ruggiero & Sauveplane-Stirling, 2019). The following quotations exemplify the evidence of these issues:

*“The dynamic between the colleagues in Latin America and the IDRC team was **incredibly positive, you know, the exact opposite of a kind of colonial health relationship.** So I felt like the IDRC walked the walk of alignment and Southern Leadership in ways that I find as unusual” (Grantee);*

FEH has supported Southern Leadership through individual leadership building and capacity development initiatives, communities of practice, research networks and South-to-South collaborations, as well as catalyzed enabling research environments that allow mid-career and young researchers to develop the leadership skills to succeed as global leaders.

Regional workshops have been a pivotal network-building and learning mechanism to catalyze new Southern-led research, bringing together Southern researchers, government and/or civil society from different parts of the world.

Regional workshops resulted in outputs such as relevant proposals, facilitated access to existing networks to support new research, and ongoing engagement and learning among participants: *“what was really striking to me was how meaningfully bottom up the experience was [...] that IDRC’s engagement in setting agenda has obviously been very much [facilitating] objectives set by the country and regional teams rather than imposing on them”* (Advisor/Consultant/Knowledge User). Similarly in Africa, *“we didn’t have a network of investigators in Africa and so they contacted all their people that would have relationships with in West Africa to see if they have willingness to participate in a trial and then they helped us define the minimum criteria for us to be of acceptable quality to participate in the study”* (Grantee).

Highlights from non-fiscal policy Case Study:

This Case Study reports on specific contributions to benchmarking from FEH-supported projects, such as project #107731: “Measuring and benchmarking food environments and policies in Latin America”, in which indicators from the Food-EPI process were used to generate an implementation score for policies and policy agreements. The comparison of benchmarking results has allowed the establishment and validation of LMIC leaders in adopting policies on obesity and NCD prevention, identifying existing gaps, and making methodological contributions to the tools used by the INFORMAS (International Network for Food and Obesity / Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs) Research, Monitoring and Action Support) network. A novel collaborative model of open data sharing among the INFORMAS network has also emerged and allowed country-based datasets (and the insights of scientists that generated them) to highlight the relevance of national level research and contribute to regional and global results.

FEH has also effectively supported Southern-led multidisciplinary research teams through joint proposal development, research investments and communities of practice that engage policy influencers in multilateral organizations and recognized experts in the North. This multi-pronged approach to building Southern Leadership for policy change has been recognized as a very strong brand for the program (and the Centre) in our evaluation (and also echoed in other IDRC-led stakeholder consultations) (Di Ruggiero & Sauveplane-Stirling, 2019). It holds potential, in our estimation, for achieving greater impact. For example, FEH supported a collaboration across Lebanon, West Bank, Egypt and Jordan aimed at generating evidence on the increasing popularity and rate of waterpipe smoking, and model the economic impacts of fiscal policies for tobacco control. *“In the Middle East, [...] they’re really generating communities of researchers and policy influencers[...] and I think that again is hard to measure but without [FEH’s] support... a lot of good work [and sharing] wouldn’t have been done”* (IDRC staff). The Salt Consortium, Healthy Food Environment Policy Index (Food-EPI) is based on the work of the INFORMAS network and IECS Argentina, that is engaged in municipal food environments research aimed at influencing policy processes; this work is also being replicated in Chile and Uruguay (see highlights above from *Annex 1-Non-Fiscal policy Case Study*).

There is strong evidence from our evaluation that FEH has particularly nurtured South-to-South collaborations *“for capacity building bringing together of researchers and policy actors within and between countries in a region and beyond for learning and capacity strengthening”* (IDRC staff).

South-to-South collaborations have resulted in contributions by Southern scientists in national and international fora as a means to increase **their presence, voice and influence** in regional and global scientific and policy debates, which in turn resulted in agenda setting opportunities.

Key examples include:

- FEH facilitated **joint proposal development** with scientists from 12 countries across the region and established a community of practice on healthy food systems and NCDs prevention.

“The community of practices [...] in the Latin American region ...has helped us [...] to understand that there are a lot of things that require cooperation between countries and that our research will

be much more influential if we do this together. We have been able to get funding from other sources and collaborate[d] with other groups [to] make us more strong in terms of what we can do and achieve with the research” (Grantee).

- In 2016, the FEH program convened various Latin American and Asian researchers to share their work and experiences in food systems research with African researchers in Cape Town. This led to many African researchers indicating *“interest in collaborating with their Latin American counterparts on yet to be determined research projects”* (IDRC, 2016).
- A multi-country collaboration led by experienced researchers in South Africa, is engaging emerging researchers in each of the seven participating countries (Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Botswana, Namibia and Zambia) to generate evidence relevant to each country context to support the adoption of fiscal and policy interventions.

“This project has brought us a lot of recognition and respect from not only the stakeholders and decision-makers because we have been providing the best quality scientific evidence to support the public policies [...] it’s an advantage for us [...] to exchange with the policy makers to know exactly what kind of questions need to be answered for them” (Grantee).

Capacity strengthening

The FEH program has supported Southern Leadership through individual and institutional capacity strengthening, a recommendation from the NCDP Evaluation. The mix of aforementioned funding modalities has developed research capacity in academic and civil society organizations in countries and regions where the need is high. For instance, at the project-design level, five out of seven of the sampled projects in SSA had expected outcomes of *financial support and capacity building of local researchers and students*. From our sampled projects, 120 Masters students, PhD students, and post-doctoral fellows were supported.

Core funding and technical support are provided to research institutions: *“[FEH] not only asked or had some call for proposals, research proposals, but also they gave some core funding and support [...] technical support as well to research institutions”* (Grantee). Raising the level of institutional research capacity, for knowledge generation and its use, *“is a very sustainable way to build capacity because you’re building relationships at the same time [that] then can be drawn upon over individual researcher and policy makers careers,....[...] lead to strengthened networks of knowledge [and] advance the cause of evidence based policy making”* (IDRC staff).

Nevertheless, more deliberate focus and investments in institution-building rather than individuals is needed. Consideration should be given to distinguishing between leadership versus building leaders, and addressing an emerging trend towards thought leadership.

“[FEH] were assuming that positional leaders was about developing leadership and that isn’t always the case. I mean sometimes it is [...] I can think of senior people within the research field who expose genuine leadership qualities but just because you’re the leader of a team doesn’t necessarily mean that you’re generating leadership within a field” (Advisor/Consultant/Knowledge User);

*“There’s increasing evidence [...] on... [...] **thought leadership which is having either individuals or groups of researchers with the capacity to influence change at more than just a national level, ... to a body of evidence that can be used at a global level** [...] (IDRC staff).*

While efforts to build research networks and opportunities for South-to-South collaboration should continue, the evaluation team suggests that the FEH program sharpen and reorient its strategy to building Southern Leadership. At present, programming efforts are skewed towards building the capacity of individual leaders; however, to more effectively influence policy that contributes to sustainable change in the South, we recommend that the program shift its focus towards institution building efforts while also emphasizing opportunities for nurturing thought leadership. A focus on institution building holds the potential to have more long-term impact. It helps shine the light on the systemic structural constraints and cultural norms that need to be disrupted in institutions to create the enabling conditions for thought leadership to develop and

thrive. As such, a more explicit institution building-oriented approach could contribute to the program's strategic focus on gender. We also heard from key informants that the program should develop more South-North collaborative efforts to facilitate the chairing of lessons learned from the South to the North, including Canada. The program should also develop metrics that meaningfully capture these multi-level influences (South-South, South-North, North-South). These findings echo recent advice received from stakeholders convened by IDRC to inform its strategic plan (Di Ruggiero & Sauveplane-Stirling, 2019).

Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability plays an important role in the promotion of healthy and sustainable diets. Consideration of environmental factors that contribute to or impede healthy eating, and associated NCD burden implications build on lessons learned from EcoHealth (FEH Program documents and key informants). We found evidence of integration of lessons learned from EcoHealth; however *"what [IDRC] was trying to do was to develop as this central idea [...] this relationship between public health and environmental health. That's fundamentally what they were trying to do was to bring these two fields, these two disciplines, these two fields together and the sustenance of the idea and that I think they've been very successful in"* (Advisor/Consultant/Knowledge User).

According to several key informants, the FEH program has also contributed significantly by investing in research that supports sustainable solutions around environmental health.

There is program-level evidence to suggest that environmental sustainability is a (re)emerging area of strategic interest for FEH with efforts to integrate it in calls for proposals focused on food production, food consumption and addressing food safety by better linking food production to ecological agriculture and food consumption. Despite these efforts, we found that it has not been sufficiently mainstreamed in projects funded under FEH – see highlights from *Annex 1 for Environmental Sustainability Case Study*.

Highlights from Environmental Sustainability Case Study:

Environmental sustainability is embedded within the research design, and implementation of some projects highlighted within the environmental sustainability case study. For example, project #108162: "Ecuador's Healthy Food Campaign: An Effectiveness Assessment" was aimed at strengthening innovative marketing campaigns on responsible food consumption with a focus on sustainable diets for the prevention of NCDs including dietary practices, disease trends, and economic, behavioural, and environmental factors. It also focused on generating local and relevant knowledge for community members to understand the environmental determinants of demand for indigenous fruits and vegetables.

Given the program's breadth and resource limitations, it has been challenging for the FEH team to meaningfully operationalize this broad strategic issue. Despite renewed interest with the SDGs, we also found evidence of lower demand and less focus on sustainability from policymakers (Key informant interviews). This observed disconnect between how the "environment" (i.e. consumer/food retail environment) component of FEH is being conceptualized, how well "sustainability" is being taken into account in the design of projects, and how environmental sustainability as a whole is addressed across FEH programming.

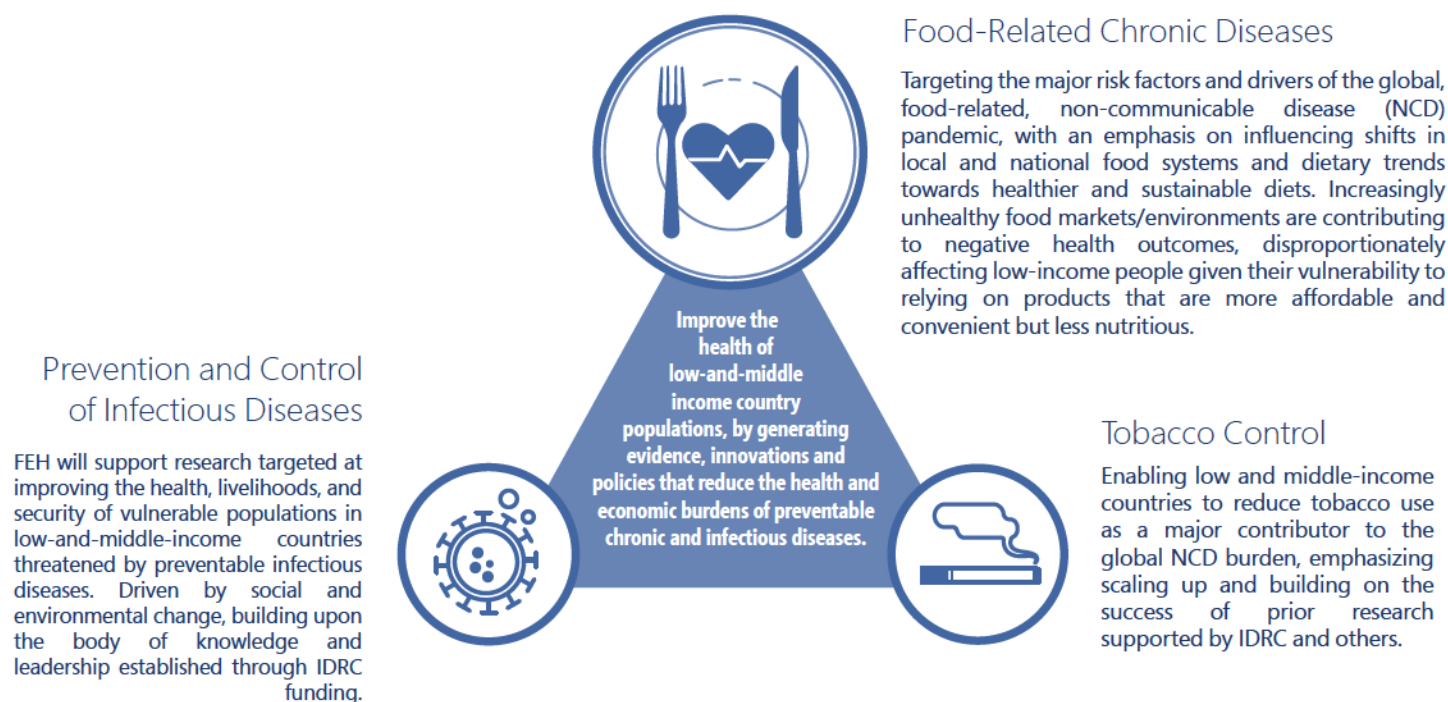
There is also evidence of new and emerging opportunities and so the program is encouraged to continue its focus on environmental sustainability as illustrated by this quote. *"I think it's important and, you know, there's more and more focus on the intersection of how we eat and the environment impact so I think it's great and I think other organizations are now tuning into this so would be super enthusiastic about IDRC continuing to have that perspective in their work"* (Donor/Partner). From our review, some projects seem to have captured the essence of this strategic issue - this nexus between food, environment and health more clearly (see *Annex 1-Environmental Sustainability Case Study*). From the seven sampled projects from SSA, two have

development outcomes relating to promoting environmental sustainability and resilience; and one of the five from MENA is focused on enhanced environmental sustainability. The extent of complementarity and linkages with the IDRC Climate Change research group, while considered vital, remains to be fully realized according to several key informants.

Summary Assessment of FEH strategy and its strategic issues

The infographic on the following page (*Figure 4*) highlights the three thematic aims of FEH' strategy and our assessment of how the program has addressed its five strategic issues.

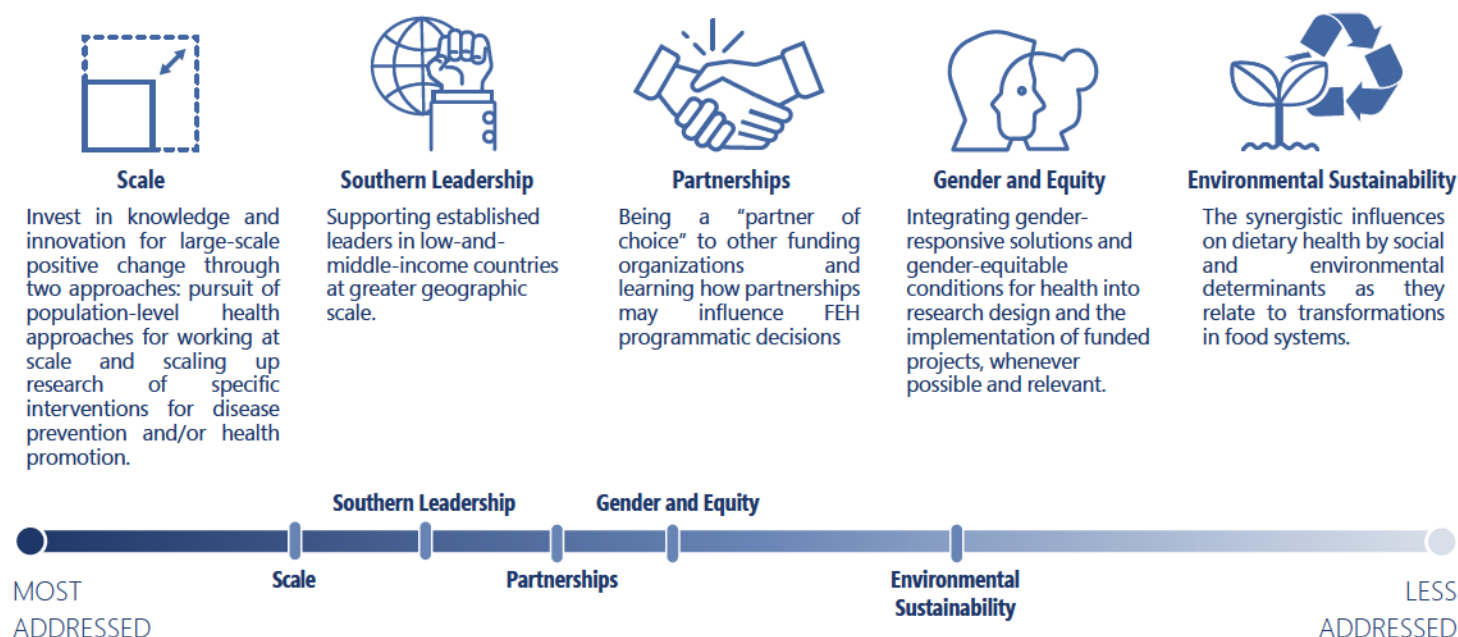
Figure 4: Overview of FEH Strategy and Its Strategic Issues



FIVE STRATEGIC ISSUES

The program's goal will be achieved by investing in solutions-oriented quality research and supporting emerging and experienced leaders to strengthen local and regional institutions, nurture young scientists, enhance research-to-action networks, and engage policy communities in processes of change based on research results. Impact will be maximized through attracting donor partners and national/local investments in scalable interventions.

The following strategic approaches, reflecting both IDRC's wider priorities, and those identified by the FEH team, have guided decision-making in program implementation across the three program themes:



2) FEH Outcome areas (EQ 4-5)

The second set of findings relate to FEH's contributions across the various IDRC "spheres"⁴ of control and influence" (EQ4), and through the five strategic issues (EQ5) in three program-specific outcome areas: effect on and through policy or practice; enhanced research capacity; and increased new knowledge.

Strengths

- An integrated approach to tackling the three outcome areas with five strategic issues is evident across sampled projects;
- There is evidence of emerging body of evidence of policy influence, including lessons learned on pathways to influence;
- FEH's program-level influence on policy and practice is grounded in an evidence-based approach using high quality scientific results from their projects;
- Workshops have been a key mechanism for learning and knowledge exchange across all three outcome areas and strategic issues like gender and equity;
- Research capacity was predominantly built at the individual level, with some evidence of institutional capacity building;
- New knowledge was well integrated into the design of projects, with activities and outputs particularly relating to the generation, dissemination and exchange of this new knowledge.

Challenges/Opportunities

- The program has opportunity to strike more balance between the regulation of unhealthy foods and the promotion of healthier diets in it's policy focus;
- The strategic issues of Scale, Southern Leadership, Gender and Partnerships were well implemented at the program level, whereas there was less programmatic evidence of achieving outcomes in the spheres of control and influence for Equity and Environmental Sustainability;
- Southern Leadership development could be further enhanced through increased institutional capacity building efforts.

Across the projects sampled at different stages of development, there is evidence of contributions across the various "spheres" of control and influence. An integrated approach to tackle all outcomes areas (policy and practice influence, the generation of new knowledge and enhancing research capacity) across FEH projects was clearly observed, with emerging evidence of policy influence. Research capacity was predominantly built at the individual level, with some evidence of institutional capacity building. New knowledge was well integrated into the sampled projects' design, with activities and outputs relating to its generation, dissemination and exchange, and emphasizing the importance of local and context-specific knowledge to influence policy and practice. Workshops have been a key mechanism for knowledge exchange and learning across all three outcome areas and certain strategic issues – namely gender and equity- which were highly valued by grantees.

However, we also assert that the program has opportunity to strike more balance between the regulation of unhealthy foods and the promotion of healthier diets in it's policy focus. Continued thought leadership in food systems research in both areas holds greater potential for achieving population health impacts (sphere of interest). Scale, Southern Leadership, Gender and Partnerships were well implemented at program level, whereas there was comparatively less programmatic evidence of achieving outcomes in the spheres of control

⁴ The spheres show that the technical conceptualization and execution of the research, and the production of research outputs, are largely under the control of the researchers, funders, and program managers. The influence that the research might have on policy and practice is sometimes, but not always, in their sphere of influence. <https://www.idrc.ca/sites/default/files/sp/Documents%20EN/Research-Quality-Plus-A-Holistic-Approach-to-Evaluating-Research.pdf>

and influence for Equity, and Environmental Sustainability. The latter may reflect the relatively earlier implementation stage for these strategic issues.

Contributions to the spheres of control and influence

The evidence gathered shows that FEH has made significant contributions across the various “spheres” of control and influence, as defined in IDRC’s RQ+ approach (FEH Program documents and key informants). The program consistently supports the conceptualization and execution of research and the production of research outputs, all of which are largely under the *control* of the researchers, funders, and program managers (Ofir et al., 2016). The *influence* that the research might have on policy and practice can be less clearly attributed because at times, policy and practice outcomes fall within the sphere of influence of their directly linked stakeholders (Ofir et al., 2016). It was also difficult to draw conclusions from all sampled projects due to insufficient documentation on the actual outcomes and/or the early stages of development of projects ongoing at the time of the evaluation (see *Evaluation methodology* for details).

Based on preliminary coding and discussions with FEH staff, we extracted indicators aimed at categorizing how well the program contributed to these two spheres from the Impact Pathways for FEH’s thematic aims. These examples were aligned to relevant indicators (85% of total indicators), for each of the three thematic aims and mapped to the predominant outcome area and strategic issue (Gender and Equity, Scale, Partnerships, Southern Leadership and Environmental Sustainability) based the evaluation’s team judgement to determine the most appropriate designation to each category.

The infographics that follow (*Figures 5 and 6*) capture high-level illustrative examples of documented contributions made across the three outcomes areas of FEH and the five strategic issues for the 43 sampled projects. For example, project #108424’s manuscripts on the effectiveness of taxation policies relate to outputs for both *Scale* and *Policy and Practice* as shown by the icons on *Figure 5*. Similarly, the community and supplementary study on the environmental risk factors and drivers for health challenges in project #107345 pertain to *Environmental Sustainability* and *Research Capacity* (*Figure 6*). Comparison of outputs and immediate outcomes across the spheres of control and influence for sampled projects showed Partnerships, Scale and Southern Leadership were the more evident strategic issues addressed compared to Gender and Equity, and Environmental Sustainability. Illustrative examples of partnerships focused on parallel and co-funding opportunities of the IDRC (see *Range of partnerships* section for details⁵).

⁵ For example, project #108016: Clinical Trials of an Experimental Ebola Vaccine: A Canadian Research Response, enabled IDRC to continue building upon its collaboration with CIHR and GAC, which is listed as an example of partnerships.

Improved access to data and methodological tools.

SPHERE OF CONTROL INDICATORS

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE INDICATORS

Countries have an understanding of local food systems, health and economic burdens, and possible solutions (sustainable and gender sensitive) for improving diets and reducing NCDs.

Increased number of LMIC-led multidisciplinary teams is established and undertakes high-quality research on food systems and health.

IDRC is established as a leading partner in research support for the prevention of food-related chronic diseases in LMICs.

5 STRATEGIC ISSUES OF FEH:



Scale



Southern Leadership



Partnerships



Gender & Equity



Environmental Sustainability



Policy and Practice



New Knowledge



Research Capacity

106981



Shaping Public Health Education, Research, and Policy in the Arab World.

Creation of 2 new centres with a focus on dissemination, outreach, and policy linkages. Supported 65 graduate and doctoral students.

108424



Evaluation of South Africa's Excise Tax on SSB.

9 manuscripts on the effectiveness of taxation policies for NCD prevention in LMICs.

107459



Television Food Advertising to Children in Argentina

Influencing policy agendas by being invited to join the INFORMAS initiative to participate in international comparisons regarding TV advertising of unhealthy foods and the Policy and Prevention Scientific & Technical Advisory Network led by the World Obesity Federation.

106888



Implementation of a Population-wide Program to Reduce Salt and Sodium Consumption in Costa Rica

The implementation and evaluation of the National Plan for Salt Intake Reduction in Costa Rica was informed by scientific evidence generated by the project.

106981



Shaping Public Health Education, Research, and Policy in the Arab World

A given law was adapted by the Ministry of Public Health of Lebanon based on new knowledge on salt iodization policies generated by the project.

OUTPUTS

108238



Support to Development of Strategy and Programming on FS Research Objectives.

A series of reports on the current state of FS research in SSA, gender equality in the MENA, and LAC to support future investments

108571



Television Food Advertising to Children in Argentina.

A peer reviewed journal article "Research on food-related chronic diseases in Latin America and the Caribbean: Are we building the evidence for gender-equitable approaches?" was generated.

IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES

108164



Childhood obesity prevention and improved nutrition through farm-to-school FS in Central America

Established partnerships with academic institutions, the Ministries of Education, Agriculture and Health of Guatemala and Costa Rica.

108166



Overcoming obstacles to adoption of Brazil's national Dietary Guidelines

Development of a new Alliance for Healthy and Adequate Eating in Brazil convening multiple national organizations to reinforce advocacy efforts.

108163



Reducing dietary related risks associated with NCD in Bangladesh

Farmers were able to adapt new farming practices with training and guidance after receiving seeds from the project, demonstrating cultivation and marketing practices, and consumption practice at the household level, and 16 cooking demonstration programs.

Figure 5: Contributions in Food Systems Across the Spheres of Control and Influence

Figure 6: Contributions for the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases and Tobacco Control Across the Spheres of Control and Influence



Outcomes areas of FEH

Significant progress has been achieved across all outcome areas and through various impact pathways (FEH Program documents and key informants).

FEH is supporting the development of local, context-specific evidence on fiscal and non-fiscal policies through the generation of new knowledge in regions that have both well-established or emerging research capacity and policy frameworks.

Policy/Practice Influence

FEH programming has been well oriented towards building the evidence base for effective fiscal or regulatory public policies. FEH has developed a recognised “*niche area*” by supporting policy tools aimed at improving health, encouraging preventive measures against unhealthy food consumption in populations, and supporting the reduction of inequities between population groups.

“IDRC is funding interesting, significant and innovative projects at the intersection between research advocacy and policy in ways that other funders aren’t and it’s really very special” (Advisor/Consultant/Knowledge User);

“We are pioneers in that regard [...] No one else is really funding that at least not in Africa. We are leading the way in terms of supporting researchers in the region to generate evidence around these policy measures and we’re beginning to see some impact” (IDRC staff).

The program’s work has aligned with various major policy agendas, being “*highly relevant to a number of the sort of WHO level policies on non-communicable disease and healthy lifestyle, on AMR, on pandemic preparedness [...] to develop the evidence base required for stronger fiscal policies for disease control*” (IDRC staff). A key example of this is the work on taxation policies for NCD prevention in the highlights shown here from *Annex 1 - SSB Case Study*. FEH’s funding has given a voice to LMIC researchers on these policy debates:

“[Our] voices have not been heard in places [...] [of relevance to] nutrition such as the World Health Organization... [IDRC] created space for us to go up and talk to these people [and help them] understand policy also takes place through practice and determining course of actions happens within local economies, situated action [...] helping us to insert this into regional debates and it’s actually had a big impact” (Grantee).

Highlights from SSB Case Study:

FEH is building an emerging knowledge base on the effectiveness of taxation policies for NCD prevention in LMICs. In South Africa, the modelling work done by the PRICELESS team succeeded in the implementation of a tax as the research team not only provided context-specific evidence, but also had strong policy advocacy connections and strategy. The continuous commitment to building regional capacity within the field of fiscal policies for the prevention of diet-related NCDs resulted in the PRICELESS team becoming a **sought-after expert resource** for other countries in the region. This PRICELESS team’s contribution to the larger policy agenda was seen by their annual participation in international forums such as the Bloomberg Global Expert Advisory Committee meetings (in 2017, 2018 and 2019).

FEH has funded “use-oriented” research informed by regional, national and/or local priorities and with an explicit intention of using findings to guide changes in public policies and/or practices. As seen in *Figure 5*, project #106981 has focused on policy dialogue informing salt iodization policies, resulting in a ministerial decision about a given law in Lebanon. In a project in Asia, the results of FEH funded research, “*indicated that there’s a necessity for soda tax[;] the Director General of Health who came to release the study findings said that he would support it and he took it up with the cabinet and the government is in the process of introducing a soda tax hopefully [...] That’s a big, big impact*” (Grantee). Embedding policy within its project’s design, implementation and outcomes, a project from the Middle East focused on policy analysis and equity, to understand “*the current situation, what are the available policies, etc. and [...] if there is a need for a change and what type of change that we need, what type of new policies should be developed*” (Grantee).

“A lot of our policy analysis work looks at differential impacts and the impact on the poor because a lot of these policies are often opposed by certain actors, economic actors, because their argument is these taxes or these measures are regressive, they’re going to impact the poor most” (IDRC staff).

Nevertheless, we assert that the FEH’s policy portfolio could be better balanced between the regulation of unhealthy foods (where the program has done more and had impact) and the promotion of healthier diets and healthy food environments (an area less emphasized). Both programmatic thrusts are important and potentially productive areas for influencing policy and achieving population health impacts (sphere of interest) through food systems research globally. Otherwise, the program runs the risk of missing out on an opportunity to exercise further thought leadership and increased legitimacy in the field of food systems research. Future policy analysis work could further incorporate an equity lens by explicitly requiring researchers to investigate the potential unintended consequences of a particular policy.

To further the influence on policy and practice, FEH has also consulted with a wide range of stakeholders (i.e. civil society, governmental institutions, decision-makers researchers from different fields of work) through multi-country projects, consortia or communities of practice: *“it’s even influencing how policy is consulted about”* (Grantee). A number of projects have engaged a variety of individuals, as seen with these highlights from the *Non-Fiscal Policy Case Study* (see Annex 1) and this key quote:

Highlights from Non-Fiscal Policy Case Study:

Illustrative of Southern-led development and implementation of food policies and regulations, a project in Mexico convened local experts from academia, civil society, national government, and the food industry to jointly assess the level of implementation of food policies and identify areas of action for influencing future policy agendas. Similarly, projects in Guatemala have included policy assessments, which supported a call for action before government authorities for improving government performance and progress towards improved nutritional health at a population level. Findings from FEH-funded research have also guided several governmental bodies in LMICs, including the Ministries of Health, Finance, and Agriculture, in making revisions to food system regulations or supporting their implementation.

“We focused on decision-makers so the idea is to translate the scientific evidence for decision-makers to facilitate their access to this kind of evidence and support them on going forward with the public policies that we are suggesting, the guidelines [we] are suggesting, the data [we are] suggesting” (Grantee).

FEH’s influence on policy and practice is based on an evidence-based approach using high-quality scientific results from their projects: *“we have been providing the best quality scientific evidence to support the public policies and it’s an advantage for us [...] to exchange with the policy makers to know exactly what kind of questions need to be answered for them”* (Grantee). Manuscripts, peer-reviewed journals and the use of diverse media platforms have been effective mechanisms to disseminate synthesized evidence to various stakeholders, as seen in Figure 5 with projects #108424 and #108571. In #106981, two new centres were created with a focus on dissemination, outreach and policy linkages as a result of FEH funding.

One project used a website *“to consolidate all of this evidence in a way that policy makers would feel that they would be empowered to make decisions and to follow on with these policies”* (Grantee).

Enabling increased access to methodologies, data and tools (i.e. case studies) has also led to cross-fertilization of project ideas across all regions of implementation:

“[An integrated approach to] local context and understanding how do policies actually play out and how does that connect with the local environment in different countries and comparatively analyze that from across different regions and jurisdictions, I think brings forth a lot of new knowledge that are of value to FEH” (IDRC staff).

“the beginning of any of these projects many of our partners don’t [...] in fact I, myself, didn’t have the experience with FEH because it’s a field that requires tools, different approaches, the use of social science approaches and the actual researchers [...], many of us, come from the experimental background” (Grantee).

Nevertheless, we recommend that the program put greater emphasis on the monitoring and assessment of FEH’s influence on policy and practice. Unless a project was already monitoring relevant data prior to the implementation of a given policy, grantees would be unable to evaluate the effectiveness of policies. By having clear and relevant indicators, this would allow grantees to:

“Evaluate and compare food environment and also to measure the difficulties of implementation in public policies [...] Why the countries have not implemented these policies yet and when they are able to be implemented to monitor and have enough data to evaluate the policies that have been successfully approved in the countries [...]to showcase] the cost effectiveness of these policies and the cost of not doing nothing, the cost of not moving forward for public health” (Grantee).

Research Capacity

Workshops have been used strategically to enhance research capacity in project design and implementation, and in building networks and inter-country and inter-continent collaborations. A focus on building an enabling environment is recognized as favourable for sharing outreach materials or research findings, as well as strengthening inter-country collaboration between different research partners, and decision-makers in Ministries:

“We started to discuss the idea of building a more organized network in this field. I already knew some of the researchers but they are always putting me in contact with people from other countries or even sometimes from in [the same country] that we are not aware of the research from each other so we can connect and share experiences and sometimes work together. So, this is something that they usually build these bridges between the researchers” (Grantee).

Workshops have been particularly useful for building capacity to improve the integration of gender in research design and implementation and support the exchange of FEH-developed tools and knowledge. Workshops on other strategic issues, like Environmental Sustainability and Equity that have not yet been fully conceptualized nor operationalized, could have unrealized potential.

“Through the workshops, all these gender approaches I learned because of the program. I have been really very influenced by my participation in the IDRC food environment program” (Grantee).

Highlights from Gender and Equity Case Study:

Greater thought has gone into gender considerations through a number of consultancies enhancing research capacity for both staff and grantees, along with a focus on gender and equity in research design, implementation, and outcomes of funded projects. We found that the program has provided a great deal of support to grantees, from incentivizing a focus on gender in calls for proposals, to project initiation stages, in order to effectively incorporate gender and equity in funded research. For example, during their first competitive call, FEH enlisted a gender consultant to advance gender and equity transformation into food systems research. This led to the creation of a report on tools to guide researchers in preparing their proposals. Additionally, based on feedback from researchers to focus on embedding stronger gender approaches, the integration of gender was seen in LAC workshop consultations for project #108571 in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Further, a Gender at Work consulting firm also provided suggestions for improving gender relevance within proposal design. Through project #108652, tools, systems, practices, and resources were identified for FEH staff and research partners to strengthen the design and implementation of projects to further integrate gender and equity dimensions more consistently and explicitly.

Grantees in countries and regions supported through FEH programming report that training and other capacity building strategies such as workshops have significantly developed research capacity in their academic and civil society organizations. FEH’s training programs have built the capacity of graduate students (Masters and PhD) and post-doctoral fellows. For example, FEH supported 65 graduate and doctoral students in project

#106981 (see Figure 5); similarly, a training on “Discrete Choice Experimental (DCE) Design on Tobacco Packaging” was given to multi-country members in project #108442 (Figure 6). Their approach also demonstrates an understanding of equity in capacity building.

“In terms of building research capacity, in terms of technical skills of research within the traditions of academic research, I think they do quite a remarkable job” (Advisor/Consultant/Knowledge User);

“For us it has been really strategic money. It has allowed to build, as I said, this food environment monitoring platform. It has allowed us to strengthen our research capacity by building connections with other researchers here and abroad. And it has also provided us opportunities to conduct, to strengthen our analytic skills by hiring students, post-doc students, and study station that have helped us on that” (Grantee).

FEH’s partners highly valued the strong emphasis on enhancing research capacity across its programming:

“[IDRC is] certainly building their [grantees’] capacity for implementation science, engagement with policy makers and engagement with media, for example, through their participation in that GACD network” (Donor/Partner);

“A research training award that’s very much focused on building capacity with a research grant that builds up the research foundation that can then be used both for training and for informing policy” (Donor/Partner);

“I think it’s very crucial to have enough research capacity and also having a voice in the countries who delivers the data and also is voicing certain issues towards policy makers” (Donor/Partner).

Highlights from Environmental Sustainability Case Study:

A project in West Africa contributed to enhanced research and regional capacity on environment and occupational health through creation of health hubs, in a regional context where environmental sustainability has been framed within a conceptual and policy focus on environmental factors that impact population health. This also enhanced research capacity amongst doctoral and postdoctoral trainees to work in affiliated centres and laboratories and receive training on sample collection protocols. All project partners helped grantees better understand environmental and occupational health issues, including: air pollution impacts, processing of electronic waste, and informal gold mining, which all significantly increase levels of environmental contamination and health risks. Therefore, these partnerships have enabled greater research capacity and awareness for the next generation of scientists addressing issues on environmental and occupational health, particularly students in West Africa.

The program should broaden its focus beyond the individual to include institution-building and regional capacity approaches to further this “iterative increase in capacity” and strengthen leadership, as seen with the highlights above from Annex 1- Environmental Sustainability Case Study.

The program should broaden its focus beyond the individual to include institution-building and regional capacity approaches to further this “iterative increase in capacity” and strengthen leadership.

New Knowledge

The FEH program has integrated the generation of new knowledge into the design of its projects across all three of its thematic aims. As previously highlighted, a significant body of research evidence on the implementation of the SSB fiscal policies in different contexts have been generated across FEH programming – see *Annex 1 SSB Case Study* for further details. Similarly, a number of projects are generating local knowledge aimed at consumers on the environmental factors that affect food systems as seen with these highlights from *Annex 1 Environmental Sustainability Case Study*. Project #108821 focuses on bridging the knowledge gap on the economics of waterpipe tobacco smoking in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (see *Figure 6*).

Highlights from Environmental Sustainability Case Study:

The project in Bangladesh aimed to generate local knowledge on the epidemiological drivers of NCDs (such as diet practices and disease trends, economic, behavioural and environmental factors) and generated local and relevant knowledge to understand the determinants of demand for indigenous fruits and vegetables. This project also attempted to promote the consumption of these foods by identifying farmer-market consumer interventions.

Workshops have also been pivotal in supporting the exchange and dissemination of new knowledge generated during FEH's programming. As highlighted previously, FEH staff and project PIs increased their knowledge and awareness on how to more effectively integrate gender and equity during a workshop.

Even during project design and implementation, grantees have been able to take the lessons learned from projects from their peers in different continents

For example, in a new project in West Africa, *"there's been a lot of exchange with research teams in Latin America. So the first iteration of their design is already further advanced than the first iteration of the Latin American team because they're building on a second phase, right, they're building on learning that's already been done"* (IDRC staff). Through stakeholder workshops, the program is fostering a supportive environment aimed at furthering relevant policy agendas: *"IDRC's willingness and recognition of the importance of creating spaces where people can get together and exchange ideas, you know, actively committing finances to meetings and to bringing groups together with quite kind of expansive agendas creates the possibility of mutual learning and things developing in new directions which is quite unusual"* (Advisor/Consultant/Knowledge User).

There is strong evidence of using different mediums for the exchange of new knowledge generated through FEH programming investments. As seen from these highlights from *Annex 1 Non-fiscal Case Study*, a variety of mechanisms were used to disseminate and exchange new knowledge relating to benchmarking results across projects. To contribute to policy/practice influence, grantees are encouraged by FEH program staff to make research findings readily available and comprehensible to all stakeholders, through the use of lay language summaries or websites to facilitate a broader reach of project results.

Highlights from Non-Fiscal Policy Case Study:

FEH has contributed to the scaling of evidence on non-fiscal food policy through a range of knowledge dissemination mechanisms, such as informational and educational materials, published technical reports and academic manuscripts, and convening local and international meetings/conferences. Further, contributions to and utilization of evidence related to benchmarking have included the development of an open data sharing platform among the INFORMAS network, the comparison of benchmarking results across projects, and methodological contributions to the tools used by the INFORMAS network.

"We wrote up some [research findings] like a small literature review in lay language about the importance [of front of pack labelling] [...] In terms of policy I think this was the most direct impact" (Grantee);

"The idea of this website was to consolidate all of this evidence in a way that policy makers would feel that they would be empowered to make decisions and to follow on with these policies" (Grantee).

Similarly, IDRC has ensured that the new knowledge produced through FEH's funding is widely disseminated through its digital library and various meetings at both domestic and international levels.

“I think that every research proposal that they fund generates new knowledge in some capacity and then they have their digital library or they host these lunch and learns where they bring together these international researchers with government representatives or other international academics or even domestic academics. I think that in and of itself it’s incredibly helpful in, you know, the researchers are the ones who are creating new knowledge but the ability to share it and have it influence policy or guidance is incredibly helpful” (Donor/Partner).

Nevertheless, we assert that there is room for further cross-fertilization of lessons and knowledge generated from FEH programming across both South-South and South-North networks and communities of practice.

3) FEH knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation

Although an evaluation question on this topic was not originally in scope, we report on headline findings relating more generally to the quality of the documentation and ongoing program-level monitoring processes (see *Annex 2* for more details), and their implications for our evaluation and future ones. We also comment on how these processes could be enhanced by the FEH program going forward.

Strengths

- Wealth of documentation and monitoring tools exist for FEH;

Challenges/Opportunities

- Tracking processes were not optimal; therefore, resulting in an untapped potential for drawing lessons learned;
- Indicators can be better streamlined across the spheres of control and influence, FEH’s outcome areas, and its five strategic issues to allow for more systematic capture of research, research capacity and policy findings;
- The lack of updated and complete program-level data in *Trackify* hinders its usability in consolidating program-level monitoring information.

Overall, tools for tracking program-level indicators and key program performance data on FEH achievements exist and are being implemented (FEH Program documents and key informants). These include quantitative data, captured mainly in IDRC’s *Trackify* database, as well as qualitative data drawn from project monitoring and completion reports captured in IDRC’s *SharePoint*. However, there is still scope for greater synergy across monitoring systems and the program-level results framework. We found an incompleteness and inconsistency of reporting against indicators across the spheres of control and influence (i.e. immediate outcomes), FEH’s three outcome areas (policy and practice influence, generation of new knowledge, and enhancing research capacity), and its five strategic issues (Gender and Equity, Scale, Southern Leadership, Partnerships, and Environmental Sustainability). In order to improve the measurement of FEH achievements, more systematic capture of research and research capacity outcomes at both individual and organizational levels, and policy findings is needed. These efforts need to be grounded in defined measures of program outcomes and impact, and represent an opportunity that holds great potential for further demonstrating the thought leadership exercised by the FEH program as a research funder. However, we assert that the amount of time and effort required for these monitoring activities also tax the human resources needed to run FEH’s overall program operations. Although *Trackify* holds potential to streamline these data, its current lack of updated program-level information hinders its usability for consolidating monitoring information and identifying lessons learned, which could feed into program-level annual reports, and future evaluations.

Opportunities for FEH Program (EQ 6)

Future opportunities for the FEH program include continuing its work aimed at preventing and reducing the rising burden of NCD by targeting its major risk factors, determinants and global, food-related drivers of this pandemic. This includes supporting research on the complex nature of food policy development, the use and impact of fiscal policy tools (e.g. SSB taxation), as well as work on the economic determinants of health requiring international and interdisciplinary collaborations and partnerships, including representation from health, economics, social marketing, NGOs, and public policy. This corroborates findings from recent consultations that identified as priorities the importance of intersectoral initiatives and regulatory policies (i.e. focus on fiscal policies), and the link between knowledge generation and policy development to address food insecurity, food production, food supply chain issues, drivers of food consumption patterns (Di Ruggiero & Sauveplane-Stirling, 2019).

The program's focus on field building and strengthening communities of practice in the Global South, in part through partnerships with other agencies and researchers, should also continue. FEH should further emphasize work on sustaining gender and equity research which informs long-term practical changes. This includes encouraging grantees to create change through action in addressing matters like structural power norms and roles, and structural power relations that lead to and reproduce gender inequalities. As a key determinant of environmental sustainability, it is crucial for the FEH program to put more emphasis on cross learning between climate change and environmental sustainability with regards to food systems, sustainable food production, and consumption. As a potential cross-cutting theme being considered by IDRC in its next strategic plan, its focus on climate change could explore, for example, the resilience of food systems during emergency situations given increased migration (Di Ruggiero & Sauveplane-Stirling, 2019).

Overall, by adopting a systems approach moving forward, FEH could better address the management of NCDs and its structural and socio-economic determinants, commercial drivers of health and equity to support the most marginalized populations affected by NCDs, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (Di Ruggiero & Sauveplane-Stirling, 2019).

Conclusion and recommendations

We conclude that the FEH program is making good progress toward its overall goal of improving the health of low-and-middle income country populations by generating evidence, innovations and policies that reduce the health and economic burdens of preventable chronic and infectious diseases. The FEH program adds value to new programming by consistently integrating lessons from previous programs (e.g. by extending emphasis on policy influence and maintaining a field building focus). There is demonstrated evidence that the program is strategically attending to strategic issues (Scale, Southern Leadership, and Gender), and to a more limited extent-Equity and Environmental Sustainability; and that it is enabling impactful research across three outcome areas (influence on policy/practice, enhancing research capacity, and generation of new knowledge). The FEH program is becoming an increasingly recognized thought leader in building the field of food systems research and that its field building (FB) approach is relevant and adapted to differences in regional contexts. Synergies between LMIC researchers across regions and countries are being realized through capacity strengthening efforts to build Southern Leadership. Through partnerships, FEH has established many funding arrangements (co-funding and parallel), and partnered with other donors to align and amplify agendas in a range of thematic areas, including neglected ones such as globally relevant food systems research to inform tax legislation. However, challenges remain with maintaining a coherent program focus. Without a harmonized field building agenda, a conceptual framework with defined measures of success for the program and an associated partnership strategy, the program may not achieve its full potential as a research leader in FEH.

In light of this program-level evaluation, recommendations for the IDRC are summarized below.

1. Protect program coherence by reducing the number of thematic aims.

In order to build and extend impactful programming on healthy and sustainable food systems research, it is recommended that FEH transition out of tobacco control and infectious diseases work, while building on lessons learned (e.g. economic analyses in tobacco control; systems approach; and policy focus). This would enable a more coherent FEH field building strategy with clear metrics set to guide the measurement of outcomes across regions, including meaningful linkages between food systems, health and the environment (i.e. climate change).

2. Leverage established programming approaches by further integrating strategic issues.

The strategic issues relating to gender and equity, Southern Leadership, working at scale and environmental sustainability are relevant to building a field of FEH research and should continue to be addressed. A stronger systems approach for integrating environmental sustainability is, however, needed. While gender is a programmatic strength, approaches to ensure that projects remain gender sensitive need to be mainstreamed throughout implementation to realize meaningful outcomes in research, research capacity and policy. Equity and the social dimensions of food systems research also need more explicit attention in programming. Diverse approaches to working at scale, whether through the formation of communities of practice or research to influence national public policy, should continue, with more attention on how to measure how well these approaches are doing to achieve scale. Southern Leadership is a hallmark of FEH programming, and a stronger focus on institution-building could lead to more sustainable research capacity in LMICs.

3. Develop a formal partnership strategy that aligns with the FEH program goals and specific metrics for measuring success.

The program should assess lessons learned from its past partnership efforts, including but not limited to partnership development, modalities and operations (i.e. engagement and equal footing amongst partners).

4. Harmonise indicators with measurable outcomes to allow for more systematic program-level capture of research and policy findings.

Given the wealth of documentation, defined indicators with clear measures of success across strategic issues and outcomes areas can improve tracking the progress of FEH's programming across the spheres, its impact pathways, and identification of lessons learned, feeding into program-level annual reports, learning and future evaluations.

Annex 1: Case studies' framework, template and outputs

Proposed Case Study Theme	Main question	Sub-questions	Related EQ# of evaluation design	Level of Analysis	Strategic Issues								Data sources
					Gender and Equity	Southern Leadership	Partnerships	Scale	Environmental Sustainability	influence/effect policy/practice	enhance research capacity	increase new knowledge	
Gender and Equity	How have gender and equity been incorporated in the design and implementation of FEH programming?	1) What is the process to ensure that no project is "gender-blind"? 2) What does successful/unsuccessful (or meaningful/not meaningful) integration look like?	EQ2, EQ4, EQ5	Regional Thematic aim	X					X	X	X	Evidence of lessons learned from working with partners Evidence from other IDRC program areas Key informant interviews
Environmental Sustainability	How has FEH integrated perspectives of environmental sustainability in their programming?	1) What is the process to ensure that projects incorporate perspectives of environmental sustainability? 2) How has FEH partnered to support this work? 3) How will current successes, challenges and gaps relating to environmental sustainability inform future program development?	EQ2, EQ4, EQ6	Regional Thematic aim					X	X	X	X	Evidence of lessons learned from working with partners Evidence from other IDRC program areas Key informant interviews
Sugared-sweetened beverages (SSB) Policy	What is the role of FEH with regards to building the evidence base for the SSB sub-field? (we could position as a sub-field under 'FEH')	1) How are policymakers engaged with FEH's SSB projects? (How were policy makers influenced or not to take up evidence from SSB projects?) 2) What are the phases of SSB field building across FEH in terms of individual capacity? 3) What are the phases of SSB field building across FEH in terms of organisational capacity? 4) How has FEH contributed to the scaling of evidence on SSB?	EQ1, EQ2, EQ4, EQ5	Country-specific with examples from different regions		X	X	X		X			Evidence of lessons learned from working with partners Evidence from other IDRC program areas Key informant interviews
Non-fiscal food policy	What is the role of FEH with regards to influencing non-fiscal food policy?	1) How are non-fiscal food policymakers engaged with FEH's projects? 2) How were non-fiscal food policymakers influenced or not to take up evidence from FEH projects? 3) How has FEH contributed to the scaling of evidence on non-fiscal food policy? 4) How has FEH contributed evidence to inform benchmarking (i.e. INFORMAS*) related to the healthiness of food environments?	EQ1, EQ2, EQ4, EQ6	Country-specific with examples from different regions		X	X	X		X			Evidence of lessons learned from working with partners Evidence from other IDRC program areas Key informant interviews

Case Study Template

Please use the following template as a guide for writing up each case study for the IDRC FEH Evaluation. The purpose of these case studies is primarily illustrative, but it is also instrumental in that it is meant to share insights (new or confirm existing knowledge) about the nature and types of influences exercised by the FEH program. If substantiated by evidence, the case could serve to challenge prevailing assumptions about the topic or illuminate something that has previously been implicit about the way the FEH program operates, etc.

1. Title of case study example

2. Describe and provide background the specific case study example, including:

- A brief outline of the case topic or problem being addressed
- Its relevance to one or more overarching evaluation question(s) and to FEH program
- Key questions we were trying to answer through this 'case' (see spreadsheet)
- Methodological justification: sources of evidence used to inform case example (e.g. literature, IDRC document and interview data)
- Timeframe

3. Describe and provide evidence for the case (in other words, what is this case an "instance of", an illustrative example of?)

- Rich description of context (this is key to help with the interpretation of the findings – for e.g. relevant points about the policy context, the IDRC context, any critical events, etc. to help reader interpret findings)
- Key Findings (presented in relation to questions we were trying to answer)
- Lessons learned (need to be balanced – what worked/what could have been done differently or could be improved)

4. Provide supporting references – for example, these can be key sources or examples of policy influence (e.g. strategy)

- peer review publications
- technical reports or policy documents

- I. Gender and Equity: how have gender and equity been incorporated in the design and implementation of FEH programming?

Gender & Equity Case Study

1. Background on Case

Case topic outline

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men, girls, boys, and gender-diverse people (Global Affairs Canada, 2019a). Gender is a key social determinant of health, which predicts health outcomes for individuals of different ages and social classes (Gupta et al., 2019). Being a priority for the IDRC, the FEH program has taken many strides in incorporating gender equity within its strategy and programming, representing one of the five strategic issues that have guided decision-making across program implementation. Its mandate is also explicit in the promotion of gender-responsive and gender-equitable solutions whenever possible, accounting for the local needs and contexts of countries funded by FEH (International Development Research Centre, 2019). Additionally, within its reporting processes and indicators (i.e. development outcomes in its project approval documents), the program intentionally asks grantees to elaborate on approaches taken to ensure no project is gender-blind, meaning that it remains aware, sensitive, and responsive to gender integration (International Development Research Centre, 2019). It is crucial for the FEH program to continue funding research projects which focus on gender equity and empowerment, promote capacity development and leadership, and supports research, policy, and practice. We assert that greater emphasis on addressing equity as a separate determinant should be considered, as the current focus is on equity in relation to gender alone. Through appropriate steps taken in promoting both gender and equity, the FEH program can contribute to the IDRC's leadership in gender transformative work through policy-relevant research addressing inequalities seen globally.

Relevance to overarching evaluation question(s) and to FEH program

This case study topic is relevant to three of the six evaluation questions, particularly questions 2, 4, and 5 respectively: how effectively FEH has incorporated the five strategic issues including gender and equity within their program, key contributions across the spheres of control and influence, and how the inclusion of the five strategic issues influences policy/practice, enhances research capacity, and generates new knowledge.

It is important to note for the context of this case study, that although the strategic issue of FEH calls for gender and equity defined separately, gender equity will be addressed as one. This is because through reviewing FEH projects, equity as related to the social dimensions of health was not addressed adequately. All examples provided below look at equity in relation to gender.

Through this case study, the key question that will be addressed is "How have gender and equity been incorporated in the design and implementation of FEH programming?" The other sub-questions include:

- 1) What is the process to ensure that no project is "gender-blind"?
- 2) What does successful/unsuccessful (or meaningful/not meaningful) integration of gender and equity look like?

For the purposes of this case study, key evidence was collected from program and project level-documentation, in addition to key informant interviews. In particular, illustrations of how gender and

equity are taken up across country-specific project examples from the program evaluation sample are listed below:

- Project #108163: Reducing dietary related risks associated with non-communicable diseases in Bangladesh;
- Project #108571: Support for healthier food systems in Latin America and the Caribbean workshop;
- Project #108652: Mentorship RSP on Gender;
- Project #108179: Coherence of Non-communicable Disease Prevention and Agri-food Policies in Argentina;
- Project #108180: Evaluating New Chilean National Regulations on the Food Supply.

2. Evidence for the case

Context

As a critical determinant of health, gender impacts an individual's risk of exposure to drivers of poor health and their overall health-seeking behaviours (WHO, 2019). Gender equality aims to create an equitable environment where one's rights, responsibilities, and opportunities are not dependent on their gender, recognizing the diversity and intersectionality of gender- diverse people (Gupta et al., 2019). It is particularly important to recognize overlapping intersections of gender with identities including age, race, culture, and sexual orientation, which perpetuate deeply rooted inequities (Government of Canada, Canadian Institutes of Health Research, & Institute of Gender and Health, 2019). Equity involves the absence of any unfair differences amongst groups of people, enabling equal opportunities for everyone, particularly in relation to their health and wellbeing (WHO, 2017).

There is growing awareness of the need to recognize gender and equity as key areas of emphasis in research, as seen in its inclusion in Sustainable Development Goal 5, which focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls (United Nations, n.d.). Additionally, with the adoption of the Canadian Feminist International Assistance Policy launched in 2017, it is evident that there is a push within the Canadian context to influence organizations like the IDRC on the importance of implementing initiatives which focus on advancing gender equality and improving overall quality of life for all women and girls (Global Affairs Canada, 2019b).

Key findings

1) How have gender and equity been incorporated in the design and implementation of FEH programming?

Our assessment of the FEH program suggests that there are significant efforts being made in advancing gender, particularly seen through contributions in the sphere of control. In contributing to the sphere of control, the FEH program has worked to revise their competitive calls and project proposal guidelines. The creation of a 'gender annex' which is attached to FEH development and testing tools, includes gender frameworks, and how to apply and incorporate them as part of the project's reporting. Greater thought has gone into gender considerations through a number of consultancies increasing new knowledge and research capacity for both staff and grantees, along with a focus on gender and equity in research design, implementation, and outcomes of funded projects. As the program's emphasis on gender and equity became particularly catalytic in 2017, project outputs/outcomes are still underway, and thus have yet to influence policy and practice level-outcomes. However, interim data suggests that significant projects, particularly within the LAC region, have incorporated a gender and equity lens to their work.

One example of gender and equity incorporation within the FEH programming study design is seen through project 108180 in Chile, which focused on equity dimensions in its study methodology. This project looked at the impact of food policy interventions on the diets of children and adolescents from low- and middle- income families, along with perceptions and attitudes of mothers towards food regulations. This project specifically recruited children and mothers from lower, middle, and upper socio-economic profiles to more broadly understand the effects of taxing and regulation on different populations. Similarly, in project 108179 in Argentina, the research team explored gender differences in consumer's perceptions of fruit and vegetable consumption, with an emphasis on participants from vulnerable job sectors. Not only was sex- disaggregated data collected in the project, but also participants' education and socio-economic status to account for both gender and social differences. Other examples of gender and equity incorporation within project design and implementation such as workshop consultations are elaborated on below.

2) What is the process to ensure that no project is “gender-blind”?

Within the context of the FEH strategy and its implementation, we found that the program has provided a great deal of support to grantees, from incentivizing a focus on gender in calls for proposals, to project initiation stages, in order to effectively incorporate gender and equity in funded research. FEH enlisted a gender consultant to advance gender and equity transformation into food systems research; for example this led to the creation of a report on tools to guide researchers in preparing their proposals. Additionally, based on feedback from researchers to focus on embedding stronger gender approaches in their research designs, the integration of gender was seen in several capacity strengthening sessions including the LAC workshop consultations for project #108571 in Sao Paulo, Brazil, the MENA proposal development workshop, the 2018 Johannesburg workshop, and the 2019 ETC workshop in London. Further, a Gender at Work consulting firm also provided suggestions for improving gender relevance within proposal design. Through project #108652, tools, systems, practices, and resources were identified for FEH staff and research partners to strengthen the design and implementation of projects to further integrate gender and equity dimensions more consistently and explicitly. This resulted in increased knowledge and awareness for both FEH staff and projects' PIs to more effectively integrate gender and equity, and sustain this learning within projects, partnerships, and across the organization. This sustained effort to integrate gender into their research programming, particularly at the initial stages of project conception and implementation, has been recognized as leading edge by other colleagues in the Centre.

3) What does successful/unsuccessful (or meaningful/not meaningful) integration look like?

Based on our document analysis, we found some evidence that the program's effort to encourage the integration of gender in research is making a difference. FEH monitors the extent of gender integration within projects on a continuum ranging from gender-blind, to gender aware, gender sensitive and gender responsive. Gender aware projects consider gender in the research project's rationale, but it is not an operative concept in the design and methodology (International Development Research Centre, 2019). Gender sensitive projects consider gender in the research project's rationale and design and methodology; however, it does not extend to analysis and action to address gender inequalities (International Development Research Centre, 2019). Gender responsive projects consider gender in the research project's rationale, design, and methodology and is rigorously analyzed to inform implementation, communication, and influence strategies. However, gender responsive research does not address structural power relations that lead to gender inequalities (International Development Research Centre, 2019).

In project 108652, in the eyes of FEH staff, successful integration consists of using sex disaggregated data; the inclusion of gender considerations in the research question and even earlier on in the proposal design

phase; considering contextual factors and how gender, income, education, and race play a role in that context; and 'who' is involved in the process and decision-making of the research. Therefore, it is evident that FEH staff is well aware of what successful integration of gender equity within FEH programming entails.

One example in which we deem is working towards successful gender integration, specifically at a gender-sensitive level based on FEH staff's points aforementioned, is project 108163 in Bangladesh. This project made a deliberate focus on female recruitment, in both participants and members of the research team. The PIs recognized the inequities existing in Bangladesh, where 32% of women above 35 suffered from hypertension compared to 19% of men, with similar distributions seen in ethnic minorities. Within the methodology of the study, special attention was given to gender dimensions and ethnicity in population surveys, to address the inequitable distribution of NCDs among genders, socioeconomic groups, and ethnicities. The majority of participants within this study were women, and female recruitment on the research team was emphasized, along with a gender specialist sitting on the research team. Therefore, this project clearly incorporates the analysis of sex-disaggregated data and involves gender specialists in the research process, to ensure gender considerations are effectively carried out throughout the project. While gender transformative research represents the highest level of gender integration, most FEH projects are still at the gender aware and gender sensitive stage. This is to be expected as the FEH program does not set out as a primary objective for research projects to be gender transformative.

Gender mainstreaming in research programming is not without its difficulties. Challenges observed from our review of documents and analysis of interview data include: grantee's research capacity to consider gender dimensions of their research problem at the beginning of a project and ability to translate these dimensions into measurement approaches and analyses of research findings, meaningful integration of gender and equity in the measurement of research, research capacity and policy outcomes, and how to further operationalize gender and equity beyond analyses that examine power relations and degrees of vulnerability experienced by sub-populations across research projects. This is consistent from challenges from the program-level commissioned reports that highlighted more opportunities to understand and strengthen the gender dimension of research, particularly with PIs are refining their methodological approaches (Gender at Work, 2018).

Lessons Learned

It is evident that gender and equity are crucial determinants which determine individual and population level health outcomes. Thus, we assert that the FEH program must work towards a stronger emphasis on sustaining gender equity research which informs long-term practical changes. This includes pushing grantees to create change through action in addressing matters like structural power norms and roles, and inequalities that define the differentiated experiences of men and women. As seen through the above projects, while gender equity is considered in project design, methodology, and rationale, implementation needs to be taken to the next step, to address structural power relations that lead to gender inequalities.

Additionally, while the issue of gender equity is being addressed within the FEH program's strategic issues, it is at the expense of a focus on solely equity, and therefore may inadvertently ignore other intersecting identities that also influence gender. Thus, we assert the need for the FEH program to better implement equity within its program design and implementation, which will translate into more calls for proposals specific to this research. Imprints of the sphere of control are seen within program strategy, as witnessed in gender expert consultations, workshops, and the creation and implementation of guidelines and tools for grantees such as the gender annex. Therefore, FEH is poised to begin measuring outcomes of the research they fund, related to the sphere of influence, to determine its policy level influence.

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- II. Environmental Sustainability: how has FEH integrated perspectives of Environmental Sustainability in their programming?

Environmental Sustainability Case Study

1. Background on Case

Case topic outline

Environmental sustainability is part of a larger umbrella of sustainability that also includes social and economic spheres (O'Connor, 2006). Sustainability was a term introduced on the global policy agenda during the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development Earth Summit, but still lacks a clear, agreed definition (Rio declaration on environment and development, 1992). Both the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) included specific environmental sustainability targets. The MDGs focused on sustainable measures for managing natural resources and ecosystems, recognizing that factors such as climate change and increasing water scarcity challenge food security and environmental sustainability (FAO, n.d.). The SDGs extend the MDG conceptual framework by encompassing economic, social and environmental dimensions of development (UNDP, n.d.). However, there remains no universally agreed scientific interpretation of the term 'environmental sustainability', resulting in a very broad and widespread understanding of the research "field".

Relevance to evaluation and methods used

This environmental sustainability case study is relevant to evaluation questions 2, 4 and 6, and exemplifies how effectively the FEH program has integrated environmental sustainability as a strategic issue in programming, and integrated lessons learned from working with partners. Evaluation questions 4 and 5 are also considered, noting that the projects included using the methodology of this case study have not yet been completed, with limited outcomes being listed within the sphere of influence.

The overarching question addressed was: "how has FEH integrated perspectives of environmental sustainability in their programming?" Two additional key questions answered:

1. What is the process to ensure that projects incorporate perspectives of environmental sustainability?
2. How has FEH partnered to support this work?

The following sampled projects were chosen as sources of evidence used to inform case study and identify important contributions (outcomes/outputs):

- Project #106905: Population Health Vulnerabilities to Vector-borne Diseases: Increasing Resilience under Climate Change Conditions in Africa;
- Project #108121: West African Research and Training Hub on Environmental and Occupational Health in the Informal Economy;
- Project #108163: Reducing dietary related risks associated with non-communicable diseases in Bangladesh;
- Project #108162: Ecuador's Healthy Food Campaign: An Effectiveness Assessment.

2. Evidence for the case

FEH's definition, strategy, and programming efforts engage with multiple interpretations of the term 'environmental sustainability', inheriting expertise from one of its predecessor programs, the Ecosystems

and Human Health Program (EcoHealth). During the period evaluated, the program aimed to impact population health through promotion of healthy and sustainable diets by supporting research within this field on how local and global food environments, dietary patterns and disease burdens can shape and are influenced by environmental factors.

Key Findings

1) How FEH integrated perspectives of environmental sustainability in their programming?

The FEH program has integrated environmental sustainability as a cross-cutting issue through its programming in multiple ways. Environmental sustainability was not a primary objective within the sampled projects; instead it was an element that seemed to be embedded within. The project in Ecuador aimed at strengthening an innovative marketing campaign on responsible food consumption with a focus on sustainable diets for the prevention of NCDs. The project in Bangladesh aimed to generate local knowledge on the epidemiological drivers of NCDs (such as diet practices and disease trends, economic, behavioural and environmental factors) and generated local and relevant knowledge to understand the determinants of demand for indigenous fruits and vegetables. This project also attempted to promote the consumption of these foods by identifying farmer-market consumer interventions. Both of these projects attempted to contribute new knowledge on environmental sustainability aimed at consumers on the environmental factors that affect food systems. In contrast, the project in West Africa contributed to enhanced research and regional capacity on environment and occupational health through creation of health hubs, in a regional context where environmental sustainability has been framed within a conceptual and policy focus on environmental factors that impact population health.

There does not seem to be an overall coherence on the definition of environmental sustainability by the FEH program. Since this cross-cutting issue has not been explicitly operationalized to its full potential within funded projects, it is challenging to draw clear conclusions about the impact that this strategic issue has accomplished. Consequently, the FEH team is encouraged to determine which aspects of environment and sustainability they are trying to impact and change.

2) What is the process to ensure that projects incorporate perspectives of environmental sustainability?

The main process to date has been to incorporate environmental sustainability as a cross-cutting issue in calls for proposals. Calls for proposals targeting food-related chronic diseases have integrated this strategic issue in the objectives of the call by focusing on public policy interventions or food system changes that are environmentally sustainable. The program has set out to support research that provides insight into changes in the local and global environments that impact food systems and population health. However, there have been limited proposals that incorporate a sound approach to directly incorporating this issue.

FEH is strategically well positioned to also tackle environmental sustainability in relation to food systems issues due to its expertise in both areas and has a unique opportunity to integrate these fields as a priority that continues to grow in importance as a significant topic globally. This focus would complement the work of the Climate Change program at the IDRC. It is evident that in comparison to the other four strategic issues, environmental sustainability requires greater emphasis and integration through a systems-level approach to better weave it into FEH projects. Since environmental sustainability is so broad a concept, clarity on the areas of interest and focus is needed in calls for project proposals and grantees guidelines to ensure program efforts are concentrated.

3) How has FEH partnered to support this work?

The program has enlisted the support of several key partners in work on environmental sustainability. Through such partnership, FEH was able to advance new knowledge on climate change and VBDs at national and regional levels, through outputs such as dissemination of 125 peer-reviewed publications, 11 WHO reports, and creation of a web-based knowledge sharing platform. Highlights include two key partnerships relevant to this strategic issue: one (project 106905) with the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR) of the World Health Organization (WHO), another with the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The TDR partnership enabled the FEH program to leverage networks, resources, expertise, and funding, from a world class expert on climate change and vector-borne diseases. For example, stronger connections were created with stakeholders at the WHO and the International Research Institute for Climate and Society at Columbia University, providing the FEH team with project technical support, protocol development, and support for capacity building, all grounded in climate change research. This led to establishing a strong community of practice of over 100 research and public health practitioners across Africa and internationally.

Project #108121 focused on creating a regional hub of research and training in West Africa under the Global Environmental and Occupational Health initiative led by the Fogarty International Centre of the US National Institutes of Health. This partnership formed between IDRC and the NIH, fostered collaborations between African, Canadian, and American researchers in environmental and occupational health. This facilitated the creation of a community of practice across North American and African students, fostering strong partnerships and exchanges of knowledge, skills, and resources. Within this project, the FEH team also partnered with the National Cancer Institute (NCI) enabling advances in scientific knowledge, as the NCI shared various resources, technical expertise, and lab skills with the project team. This also enhanced research capacity amongst doctoral and postdoctoral trainees to work in affiliated centres and laboratories and receive training on sample collection protocols. All partners involved with this project helped grantees better understand environmental and occupational health issues, including: air pollution impacts, processing of electronic waste, and informal gold mining, which all significantly increase levels of environmental contamination and health risks. Therefore, these partnerships have enabled greater research capacity and awareness for the next generation of scientists addressing issues on environmental and occupational health, particularly students in West Africa.

With limited projects within the sample that have a specific focus on environmental sustainability, we assert that the FEH program requires greater emphasis on partnerships specific to this issue to further their work thus far. This could include partnering with the Climate Change program at the IDRC by leveraging off their existing networks and links in the field. Additionally, there seems to be some strong partnerships fostered overtime, as seen with TDR and NIH, which could be sustained. One challenge to address, which was seen in partnering with TDR, is administrative delays associated with a two-stage international Call for Proposals, and ethics approval.

Lessons learned

Within the FEH program, it is evident that while progress is being made towards an integration of food production and food consumption with an environmental concern, this strategic issue is not at the forefront of projects. A challenge that was found through project documentation review was that the incorporation of environmental sustainability in project design and implementation was more of an afterthought, as opposed to a central primary focus. Therefore, more emphasis is needed on the incorporation of an environmental sustainability within FEH programming. Additionally, it is apparent from past programming that collaborations between North and South stakeholders can result in conflicting lines of communication between funders and grantees. Therefore, it is critical to elicit open and regular feedback on project design gaps and revisions, amongst all partners involved.

It is also evident that climate change is gaining greater global attention as a significant area of focus within environmental health. As a key determinant of environmental sustainability, it is crucial for the FEH program to put more emphasis on cross learning between climate change and environmental sustainability, which can be made possible by collaborating with the existing Climate Change program at IDRC. An area of focus which is not currently being met, is understanding the intersection of climate change, food systems, sustainable food production, and consumption. Therefore, this serves as an area for growth in informing future program development specific to environmental sustainability. Additionally, through the success of its long-standing and new partnerships, it is crucial for the FEH program to sustain and leverage off existing partnerships (including those fostered from the EcoHealth program) to inform future program development.

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- III. Sugared-sweetened beverages (SSB) policy: what is the role of FEH with regards to building the evidence base for the SSB sub-field?

Sugar Sweetened Beverage (SSB) Taxation: Case Study

1. Background on Case

Case topic outline

Dietary-added sugars have been gaining attention around the world over the past decades due to their association to poor health outcomes. More specifically, the consumption of sugar sweetened beverages (SSBs) has been linked to diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including increased risk of obesity, heart disease and diabetes (Yoshida & Simoes, 2018). SSBs include regular soda, fruit drinks, sports, energy and fruit flavored drinks, sweetened waters, coffee, tea, and syrups used to make SSBs (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2015). In low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) more than three quarters of the global burden of NCDs occurs (WHO, 2018). Consequently, many countries are considering, or have begun implementing a series of policy measures aimed at reducing SSB consumption. Consistent with the peer review literature, the FEH program recognizes that economic policies, such as SSB taxation, is one promising strategy of a wider, more comprehensive set of policies needed in order to tackle diet-related NCDs. The program is supporting research on the use and impact of fiscal policy tools and concepts related to the economic determinants of health. Fiscal policies such as SSB taxation ultimately aim to reduce diet-related NCDs by decreasing consumption. Understanding the pathways of effects through which SSB taxation operated on curbing SSB consumption is integral to their successful design, implementation, evaluation and sustainability (World Cancer Research Fund International, 2018). This case study will examine the SSB taxation policy as a key thrust in FEH programming.

Relevance to evaluation and methods used

The SSB taxation case study is relevant to questions 1 and 2 of the evaluation design. These questions touch on the FEH program strategy in terms of how well the program has implemented a strategic body of research in the food systems thematic aim; as well as how effectively the program has integrated the following strategic issues: Scale, Southern Leadership, and Partnerships. Furthermore, this case study also touches on evaluation questions 4 and 5, relating to the FEH program's sphere of control and influence as defined by IDRC, with a focus on contributions to policy and practice influence (Ofir et al., 2016).

The key question addressed through this case study example was "What is the role of the FEH program with regards to building the evidence base for the SSB sub-field?" Four additional sub-questions include:

1. How are policymakers engaged (or not) with FEH's SSB projects? (How were policy makers influenced or not to take up evidence from SSB projects?)
2. What are the phases of SSB field building across FEH in terms of individual capacity?
3. What are the phases of SSB field building across FEH in terms of organisational capacity?
4. How has FEH contributed to the scaling of evidence on SSB?

This case study aims to highlight the SSB fiscal policy relevance of FEH research programming. The following projects were chosen from the sampled projects for this program evaluation and highlight important contributions (outcomes/outputs):

- Project 108424, Evaluation of South Africa's excise tax on Sugar-Sweetened Beverages;
- Project 108646, Modelling the impact of strategies to address the burden of sugary drinks consumption in Latin America and the Caribbean;

- Project 108168, Reducing Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Consumption in Argentina;

The main sources of evidence were drawn from project documents (such as project completion reports, technical reports), key informant interviews, as well as other relevant published literature – see *Section 3* for more details.

2. Evidence for the case

Context

Trends in global consumption of SSBs seem to be exceeding World Health Organization's recommendations of limiting daily sugar intake to 10% of total daily energy intake for adults and children (WHO, 2015). For example, North America and Latin America were the largest consumers of SSBs per capita in 2014, with 150 and 110 kcal/day per capital respectively (Popkin & Hawkes, 2016). Additionally, four of the six highest countries per capita of daily kcal/cap SSB sales were in Latin America with the first being Chile, followed by Mexico, Argentina and Peru (Popkin & Hawkes, 2016). Taxation of SSBs is gaining momentum due to a growing body of literature on the implementation of SSB taxation policies. An important LMIC example of SSB taxation has been Mexico's implementation of a 10% excise tax that has demonstrated on average an 8.2% decrease in purchases after the first 2 years of implementation (Colchero et al., 2017). Such examples provide the much-needed evidence that has the potential to enable policy makers in adopting SSB taxation. Several factors such as the economic, political, cultural and social aspects can influence and shape the way the SSB tax is created and implemented (World Cancer Research Fund International, 2018). Targeted and context specific approaches to the design, implementation, and evaluation of SSB fiscal policies have a higher likelihood of successful policy uptake (World Cancer Research Fund International, 2018). One of the main challenges for the development and execution of SSB taxation has been industry interference. To counter this influence, it is essential to build evidence that supports advocacy efforts and policy design. The design and implementation of a SSB tax should utilize evidence on its effects on price, purchasing behaviour and consumption (World Cancer Research Fund International, 2018).

Key Findings

1) How are policymakers engaged (or not) with the FEH's projects?

Based on our assessment, the role of the FEH program within the field of SSB taxation policies has successfully contributed to pushing the SSB taxation policies and policy agenda by specifically targeting various entry points. These include: incentivizing policy-relevant and collaborative research that meaningfully and frequently engages policymakers; supporting LMIC researchers to capitalize on windows of opportunity to influence policy and advocate for change in SSB taxation; and developing strategies that sustain momentum in the face of an influential food industry. The program has funded impactful research that provides evidence for regulatory public policies aiming to decrease the consumption of unhealthy foods and making advances in fiscal policies through their strategic programming.

Our findings based on the sampled projects also demonstrate that policymakers have been directly engaging with FEH-funded researchers in LMICs at various levels. For example, considerable advances in terms of developing evidence for SSB fiscal policies were made in Argentina. This research team was invited to participate in multiple consultation meetings organized by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Finance to discuss the economic and health aspects of a SSB taxation policy. The information generated by this research team was used by Ministry of Health officials and legislators to promote the 17% tax on SSBs that was originally included in the Tax Reform presented to the National Congress. However, the proposed SSB taxation was deleted from the reform due to strong lobbying efforts from the food industry. Political momentum and supportive environments are key components for the uptake of

SSB taxation and evidence while strong evidence is necessary to provide justification for the tax, it is insufficient without sustained efforts to mobilize constituencies and advocate for policy change in the face of countervailing industry forces. Project #108646 modeled the impact of SSB consumption in Brazil, Trinidad and Tobago, and El Salvador. By incorporating more policy advocacy and engagement around SSB taxation, this research team completed one of the two policy dialogues that included decision makers, academics, key opinion leaders, civil society representatives, and regional strategic partners. The policy dialogue helped to identify perceived barriers to implement new interventions or reinforce current interventions and information gaps on the SSB economic model. The evaluation team asserts that the provision of robust local evidence with persuasive policy advocacy efforts such as engaging with critical stakeholders are expected to be more powerful in promoting SSB fiscal policy change.

SSB taxation policies can be health-related and/or revenue-related depending on numerous factors: availability of local evidence, the political and social environments, and stakeholders' agendas. In Africa, excise duties on SSBs are already part of the national agendas of Kenya, Tanzania, and Rwanda, which are geared towards revenue generation as opposed to the health of the population. The FEH grantees have also been working directly with the Ministry of Health in South Africa to support national NCD strategies and taxation policies based on health oriented scientific evidence, which directly contributed to a SSB taxation law. Under the previous NCDP program and the Healthy Diet call for proposals, the PRICELESS team worked on the modelling of a potential 20% increase in SSB tax in South Africa. The tax measure was officially announced in the budget speech of 2016 and finally got implemented in April 2018; however, by then it had reduced to 11% due to food industry push back. The FEH program funded project 108424 as a second grant to maintain momentum within the region and address the need for observed responses as opposed to estimations to the implementation of the proposed SSB excise tax policy, a first for the African continent. In our estimation, the South Africa experience is illustrative of how the FEH program's commitment to field building, scaling a body of knowledge, and sustained attention to SSB taxation is directly contributing to the likelihood of changes in taxation policies with public health objectives at the core. Within IDRC's sphere of control, the FEH program has been a critical player in strengthening capacity for the economic analysis of SSB taxation that is context- and country-specific and supports upstream NCD prevention. The early success with the implementation of the SSB fiscal policy in South Africa was a major accomplishment for the FEH program within their sphere of influence.

2) What are the phases of SSB field building across the FEH program in terms of individual capacity?

Through the work on taxation policies, the FEH program has used multiple strategies to promote field building in terms of individual capacity across various regions funded. Based on the previously described framework of field building phases (Di Ruggiero et al., 2017), the knowledge base of SSB taxation around the world is growing thanks to the funded work by the FEH program. This ongoing development of an emerging and credible knowledge base on the effectiveness of taxation policies for NCD prevention in LMICs aims to target the larger policy agenda by using its funded work to develop standards and exemplars that build the legitimacy of the field. In South Africa, the FEH funded research contributed to the knowledge base needed through the modelling work done by the PRICELESS team to influence policy and observed, not estimated, statistics by evaluating the SSB tax approved in the region. Although no policy change resulted from FEH funding, the research work completed by the team in Argentina was shared through a press release and the IDRC's Think Tank initiatives in order to widely disseminate important lessons learned and discuss the advantages and the disadvantages of the project.

The field building efforts included not only providing context-specific evidence, but also having strong policy advocacy connections and a strategic approach. The FEH program supports the influential scientific leadership of southern researchers by encouraging and enabling them to systemically interact with policy

makers and advocacy organizations in national debates. This PRICELESS team's contribution to the larger policy agenda was seen by their annual participation in international forums such as the Bloomberg Global Expert Advisory Committee meetings (in 2017, 2018 and 2019). For the SSB project in Argentina, one of its research members was hired by the Ministry of Health to be the National Director of Health Research. In this new position, this individual is responsible for organizing and implementing the Ministry of Health's research programs.

By taking a context-specific approach and considering the needs of individual countries to adopt taxation policies, the FEH program continues to build the field of SSB fiscal policies by strengthening research and advocacy capacity of individuals across in the Global South. The economic model developed by the PRICELESS team built capacity for research on NCD prevention and SSB taxation while creating a team of highly skilled individuals; this has become a sought-after resource for other countries in the region.

In Latin America and in particular Argentina, the experience acquired by these research teams in generating new and relevant knowledge for credible policy- and action-oriented evidence has enhanced their expertise and positioning in this field, helping them assume higher impact leadership roles to shape the health policy and research landscape related to SSB taxation policies.

3) What are the phases of SSB field building across the FEH program in terms of organizational capacity?

There is limited evidence of emerging institutional capacity within the field of SSB as a result of FEH program funding. Based on the document review of sampled projects, it was challenging for the evaluation team to describe the various phases of field building in terms of organizational capacity as only one sampled project #108168 had been completed while others are still in progress. Nevertheless, we can confirm that FEH funding within the field of SSB leveraged the organizational capacity of certain institutions and research teams that had previous research capacity and experience with economic policies (tobacco control taxation).

4) How has FEH contributed to the scaling of evidence on SSB?

We found that the FEH program has contributed to scaling of evidence on SSB by supporting contextually-relevant research on taxation policy models, creating supportive environments through stakeholder engagement, building on previous evidence between SSBs and diet related NCD risk as justifications for policy change, and developing a knowledge base that can help other countries in the same regions (e.g., SSA & LAC). The FEH program pursued research on the taxation of highly processed beverages to guide public policy interventions with the aim for national uptake and ultimately an improvement in population health. FEH investments in LAC generated evidence on the economic and population health burdens from the consumption of SSBs in four countries and designed a tool that will be applicable at the scale of the whole region in future research efforts. Additionally, this project fostered a policy dialogue with various stakeholders and decision makers at the beginning of the project and plans to conduct a second policy dialogue at the end to disseminate the results. In Argentina, the project provided sound scientific evidence to support the basis of SSB taxation by providing contextually relevant justification for the implementation of the fiscal policy. In South Africa, the project will continue to build on PRICELESS team's policy win by generating evidence on the economics, evaluation and expansion of SSBs policies. This project is illustrative of how the FEH program's approach to scaling evidence as it holds agenda setting potential in influencing leadership and action in other South African and international organizations and governments.

Lessons learned

The FEH program has integrated lessons learned from previous tobacco taxation policies across the other thematic aims and broader food systems work have paved the way for a stronger systematic approach to SSB fiscal policies. The program has capitalized on previously funded work on tobacco control and food systems by funding organizations and individuals that had experience with IDRC on those topics or had a strong background in using similar economic models. Being able to support multiple SSB fiscal policy studies in different contexts has led to the generation of new knowledge for the implementation of the policy. An important lesson learned from Argentina is that even with sound scientific evidence, when faced with strong industry opposition, policy change will be difficult. Thus, the program is making efforts towards fostering a supportive environment by engaging various stakeholders through policy dialogues and disseminating research findings across the world through conferences to put SSB taxation policies on the global agenda.

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IV. Non-fiscal food policy: what is the role of FEH with regards to influencing non-fiscal food policy?

Non-fiscal Food Policy: Case Study

1. Background on Case

Case topic outline

Determinants of dietary patterns and diets are complex and require multi-pronged and multi-level approaches that are synergistic and complementary. These range from regulatory restrictions on marketing and advertising, regulatory purchasing disincentives (e.g. front of package labels), mandatory limits and standards for food purchase or sale; as well as non-tax policy incentives for increasing access and affordability to healthier foods. The FEH program in food policy interventions applies “food systems” thinking to promote policy interventions on healthy diets, of which taxation policies (e.g. the sugar-sweetened beverage tax) is but one element of strategic programming intent achieved through field-building and funding of policy-relevant research for population health benefit. Non-fiscal food policy research aims to improve effectiveness of recommended food policies targeting reduction and prevention of obesity and non-communicable diseases (NCDs). For example, this includes assessing the extent of policy implementation by governments, and INFORMAS-related work on benchmarking. This research also focuses on the development and refinement of standards on public-private partnerships that prevent conflicts of interests, or promote ethical standards in research.

FEH programming touches all of these aspects in different ways, some as entry points for local capacity building, and others as leverage points to guide food systems change. A key outcome area throughout is the policy and practice influence of projects in the food system portfolio, whether at the level of assessing policies that have already been implemented; or benchmarking food environments to enable the assessment of impacts resulting from future policy change.

FEH project support has facilitated engagement of research with policy and policymakers in a range of direct and indirect ways - from informing food policy agendas and assessing current policy implementation, to initiating and creating platforms for policy dialogues with relevant stakeholders from different sectors (e.g. from academia, civil society, and government). Evidence drawn from FEH projects has guided and informed food policy; for example, by filling assessment gaps on the effectiveness of food regulations that governments are not able to address. Uptake of research evidence has also helped to fuel dialogues between policymakers and stakeholders across food, environment, and health sectors. FEH has also contributed to the scaling of evidence on non-fiscal food policy through a range of knowledge dissemination mechanisms, such as informational and educational material, published reports and academic manuscripts, and local and international meetings and conferences. Further, contributions to and utilization of evidence related to benchmarking have included the development of an open data sharing platform among the INFORMAS network, the comparison of benchmarking results across projects, as well as methodological contributions to the tools used by the INFORMAS network.

Relevance to evaluation and methods used

This case topic is relevant to evaluation questions 1 and 2, which relate to the FEH program strategy in terms of how well (given the context, risks, and opportunities) the program has implemented a strategic body of research in food systems; as well as how effectively the program has integrated the strategic issues, particularly those related to Scale, Southern Leadership, and Partnerships. This case topic is also relevant to evaluation questions 4 and 6, which relate to FEH program outcomes, especially in terms of

its contributions to policy and practice influence; as well as to highlighting significant opportunities for the program moving forward.

The key question we were trying to address through this case example was: “What is the role of FEH with regards to influencing non-fiscal food policy?” Four additional sub-questions include:

- 1) How are non-fiscal food policymakers engaged with FEH's projects?
- 2) How were non-fiscal food policymakers influenced or not to take up evidence from FEH projects?
- 3) How has FEH contributed to the scaling of evidence on non-fiscal food policy?
- 4) How has FEH contributed evidence to inform benchmarking (i.e. INFORMAS*) related to the healthiness of food environments?

This case study aims to highlight the non-fiscal food policy relevance of FEH research programming, using country-specific examples from projects in Mexico, Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, and Argentina:

- Project #108177: Overcoming barriers in the implementation of Mexico's school food regulation;
- Project #107731: Measuring and benchmarking food environments and policies in Latin America (Mexico, Chile, Guatemala);
- Project #108170: Developing a front-of-package labeling system in Guatemala to encourage healthier beverage choices;
- Project #108180: Evaluating new Chilean national regulations on the food supply;
- Project #108179: Coherence of non-communicable disease prevention and agri-food policies in Argentina;
- Project #108166: Improving food systems in Brazil: overcoming obstacles for healthy and sustainable diets;

The main sources of evidence were drawn from project documents (such as project completion reports, technical reports, and overview presentations delivered by project leads), key informant interviews, as well as other relevant published literature (e.g. publications resulting from funded projects) - see *Section 3* for more details.

2. Evidence for the case

Context

Overweight and obesity have increased globally, accounting for 3.4 million deaths annually. While the prevalence of obesity in high-income countries is more than double that of low- middle-income countries (LMICs), the **rate of obesity** increases has been much higher in LMICs. Increased production, availability, marketing and consumption of ultra-processed food and beverage products have changed food systems and are a main driver of increased obesity and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) risk. The food policy environment also influences food accessibility and diet quality, and their health sequelae; as both fiscal and non-fiscal food policies can influence the presence and types of food retailers, affordability of healthy foods, product placement, and food advertising. For example, in Mexico, unhealthy school food environments are being targeted as likely contributors to the rising incidence of childhood obesity and related NCDs, such as diabetes. Current evidence indicates that 1 in 3 Mexican children are overweight or obese, and an estimated 1 in 2 children born in 2010 will develop diabetes over their lifetime if actions are not taken to reverse this trend. In other countries, such as Brazil, a more holistic view of the food system has revealed private sector driven shifts, such as the replacement of real food with ultra-processed products, and replacement of family farming with agro-ecological approaches with monocultures on large lands.

Research, policy, and advocacy efforts supported by the FEH program have contributed to the implementation and strengthening of food regulations and dietary guidelines for population health, and influenced public policy or policy agendas around food production, availability, marketing and consumption. For example, in Mexico, *El Poder del Consumidor* is an independent, non-profit organization that is working on a Joint Agenda to prevent malnutrition and obesity (Alianza por la Salud Alimentaria), which includes a particular focus on children and improving the nutritional quality of school food environments. In Brazil, the Institute of Consumer Defense (IDEC) aims to build a synergistic and multi-sector food system intervention that will generate new knowledge, and identify and test innovative approaches and strategies at the local and national levels, to understand and overcome obstacles of adopting the recommendations for healthy eating set by the 2014 Dietary Guidelines for the Brazilian Population. A multi-site project (Mexico, Chile, and Guatemala) used monitoring tools developed by the international INFORMAS (The International Network for Food Obesity/ NCDs Research, Monitoring and Action Support) network to benchmark food policies and environments, with the aim of enhancing government and private sector accountability to increase healthy foods and reduce obesity and diet-related NCDs. The INFORMAS network has developed a monitoring framework, called the Healthy Food Environment Policy Index (Food-EPI), to assess the extent of implementation of government policies and actions for creating healthy food environments, compared to international best practices.

Key Findings

1) How are non-fiscal food policymakers engaged (or not) with FEH's projects?

FEH project support has facilitated engagement of research with policy and policymakers in a range of direct and indirect ways - from informing food policy agendas and assessing current policy implementation, to initiating and creating platforms for policy dialogues with relevant stakeholders from different sectors (e.g. from academia, civil society, and government). In **Mexico**, the Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública (INSP), convened experts from academia, civil society, national government, and the food industry to jointly assess the level of implementation of food policies compared with international best practices and identify five critical areas of action that could be put on a policy agenda going forward. Projects in **Guatemala** have included interviews with key stakeholders from academia, industry and international health organizations about perceptions on labeling systems; as well as an assessment of policy and regulation, which supported a call for action before government authorities for improving government performance and progress towards better population nutritional health. In **Chile**, project support has facilitated interaction with policy makers in direct and indirect ways. For example, technical meetings with the Ministry of Health; invitations to present results of a food regulation evaluation to government health authorities; and an invitation to join the working groups of the local codex committee on Food Labelling and on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses.

Project teams in **Argentina** were successfully involved in multiple policy dialogues and engaged in new collaborations with the government, strategic stakeholders, FAO and PAHO. The project also enabled the identification, contact and exchanges with new relevant stakeholders from different sectors. More indirect opportunities for policymaker engagement through research initiatives included opening platforms for discussion between different actors in food related policies; and also revealing a lack of knowledge or coordination among these actors, such as between the Ministries of Education and Health.

2) How were non-fiscal food policymakers influenced or not to take up evidence from FEH projects?

Evidence drawn from FEH projects has guided and informed food policy; for example, by filling assessment gaps on the effectiveness of food regulations, and fuelling dialogues between policymakers and stakeholders across food, environment, and health sectors. Research in **Chile** helped to assess the effectiveness and impact of food regulations, as well as fill assessment gaps that the government was not

able to carry out. Findings from the FEH-funded research have guided several governmental bodies including the Ministries of Health, Finance, and Agriculture in revising regulations or supporting their implementation. In Guatemala, new evidence on the effect of a front-of-package labeling system. has already informed PAHO's Expert Consultation Meeting on Front-of-Package Labeling, and the National Commission for the Prevention of Chronic Diseases and Cancer in Guatemala. Argentinian researchers have provided input to a Ministry of Health working group to explore strategies to increase fruit and vegetable consumption.

In Ecuador, a literature review conducted by the project team was influential in guiding front of package labelling policy; particularly in the fight against industry to maintain the labelling, as research showed that those who do not read the labels drink five times more sweetened drinks than those who do. Evidence from research in Ecuador also played a role in resisting a push by the food industry to install genetically modified organics, transgenics, seeds and crops in Ecuador. Project outcomes in Ecuador also helped to put responsible consumption on the policy agenda. In working with the INFORMAS network, Mexican researchers and policymakers have fueled a dialogue about public water availability in cities and in schools; and policymakers are increasingly supporting restrictions of marketing of unhealthy products to children.

3) How has FEH contributed to the scaling of evidence on non-fiscal food policy?

FEH grantees have contributed to the scaling of evidence on non-fiscal food policy through a range of knowledge dissemination mechanisms, such as informational and educational material, published reports and academic manuscripts, and local and international meetings and conferences. The El Poder del Consumidor communications campaign was launched across 9 schools in Mexico City, and produced an informational folder for school authorities, and informational banners, videos, and a website for the greater school community regarding the existence of guidelines that stipulate which foods and beverages are allowed to be sold in primary schools and which are not allowed, and actions that can be taken to improve the health of the school food environment. These informational materials were accompanied by planned round table discussions with Secretariats of Education and Health, national and local media appearances, and a pilot digital campaign on Facebook. From the project in Brazil, two papers related to the food environment in Jundiaí city, and one paper related to the education intervention about the Brazilian Dietary Guidelines were published in peer-reviewed journals. Additional manuscripts have been submitted, relating to labelling of packaged foods, and an assessment of the health and policy implications of food and beverage advertising using the INFORMAS protocol.

Outputs from project #107731 (Measuring and benchmarking food environments and policies in Latin America) have included shareable country datasets for a selected number of impact modules (food composition, food labelling, food promotion) to guide government authorities in implementation, evaluation and refinement of food policies and regulations related to food taxes, composition of packaged food products, food marketing, food labelling and mass media advertising. Research in Argentina and Chile has produced several published manuscripts, and several others in different stages of peer-review that cover effects of regulations on purchase, consumption behaviours, effectiveness, and lessons in policy development and implementation. In addition, over 30 technical meetings with Chilean government, national governments across the world (involving 17 countries), and national and international civil society organizations have been organized and documented. Research results from Guatemala have been disseminated locally through a conference, and findings have been shared regionally at a front-of-package consultation meeting at the Pan American Health Organization. Results have also been disseminated among the international academic community through submitted abstracts and participation in meetings and events organized by the National Commission for the Prevention of Chronic Diseases and Cancer.

4) How has FEH contributed evidence to inform benchmarking (i.e. INFORMAS*) related to the healthiness of food environments?

Contributions to and utilization of evidence related to benchmarking have included the development of an open data sharing platform among the INFORMAS network, the comparison of benchmarking results across projects, as well as methodological contributions to the tools used by the INFORMAS network. The greatest contribution to benchmarking from research highlighted in this case comes from project #107731 (Measuring and benchmarking food environments and policies in Latin America). One of the most important findings was that none of the indicators from the Food-EPI process received a global general aggregated score of 'highly implemented' in terms of policies and policy agreements. In fact, the entire exercise demonstrated the potential to become a platform for continued policy dialogue towards effective actions to address the burden of NCDs and obesity in Latin America and other developing countries. Open data sharing among the INFORMAS network (a novel collaborative model) incorporates the insights of the scientists that generated the country-based datasets to bring out the relevance of their work nationally, while contributing to higher-level (regional to global) results. The comparison of benchmarking results has allowed the establishment and validation of leaders in adopting progressive and constructive policies on obesity and NCD prevention, as well as identifying existing gaps. For example, Project #107731 helped Chilean and Mexican research teams to be recognized for their expertise in the emerging field of research on food systems for healthy diets and NCD prevention. The project also contributed to establishing a strong Southern leadership in an emerging field of research, guiding policy assessment and implementation in Mexico, Chile and Guatemala, and making methodological contributions to the tools used by the INFORMAS network. The Brazil INFORMAS has also been an important driver for creating policies, as well as justifying existing ones, both locally and in other countries.

Lessons learned

Obesity primarily affects disadvantaged groups, but society pays the costs; thus supporting vulnerable populations benefits everyone, a lesson learned from food policy interventions in Latin America that could be applied in other regions. In fact, evidence from policy intervention research in the Global South has influenced policy dialogues in northern countries, such as food labelling and food marketing restrictions in Canada. Similar and ongoing projects in Africa would also benefit from Latin American experiences, building on current partnership efforts. A notable takeaway from Project #107731 was the importance of the transitioning time and learning curve that are needed in an emerging field of research that brings together scientists from different disciplines for which social and gender equity dimensions remain largely outside their respective academic disciplinary culture. Obesity prevention policies have faced major opposition from the food industry, a lesson learned in Mexico where conflicts of interest have harmed the integrity of policy development and implementation processes. Such negative influences also come from the actions of global food and beverage companies, which undermine local public health efforts. In contrast, an unexpected finding (highlighted by an interviewee) was that some large transnational companies have policies that are more promoting of a healthy food environment than some of the local companies. This highlights the complex nature of food policy development, and that obesity prevention requires international and interdisciplinary collaborations, including representation from health, economics, social marketing, NGOs, and public policy. Adverse influences from the food industry should be documented and disseminated in order to make accountability a social norm.

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Annex 2: FEH Knowledge, monitoring, and evaluation review

As an amalgamation of previous programs and in an attempt to consolidate outcomes across all themes, the FEH team identified program-specific indicators (e.g. number of projects that include economic analysis to support action on NCDs and NTDs) to match each theme, with a handful aligning to corporate indicators (e.g. number of innovations being widely used and adopted). This information is drawn from qualitative tracking sheets (an annex) given to all grantees on an annual basis to accompany interim or final technical reports for tracking program-level indicators on project achievements. Administered after its testing at the beginning of 2017, this annex is then validated by responsible FEH program officers and numbers are assigned to their indicators based on the grantees' responses for each section which then feeds into the specific FEH monitoring database to highlight progress and achievements for wider dissemination. However, of the 43 sampled projects, only 23% had this annex available, with a predominant focus from LAC (7 LAC projects, 2 MENA projects, and 1 Canada project). For 23% of sampled projects, it was difficult to summarize across these projects due to the **incompleteness and inconsistency of reporting against indicators**, tracking outputs relating to policy, innovations, or project activities. For example, *Trackify* reports 100 graduate students supported while in the monitoring annex, there were 120.

Table 3. Trackify Results by Indicator Category across 21 FEH projects

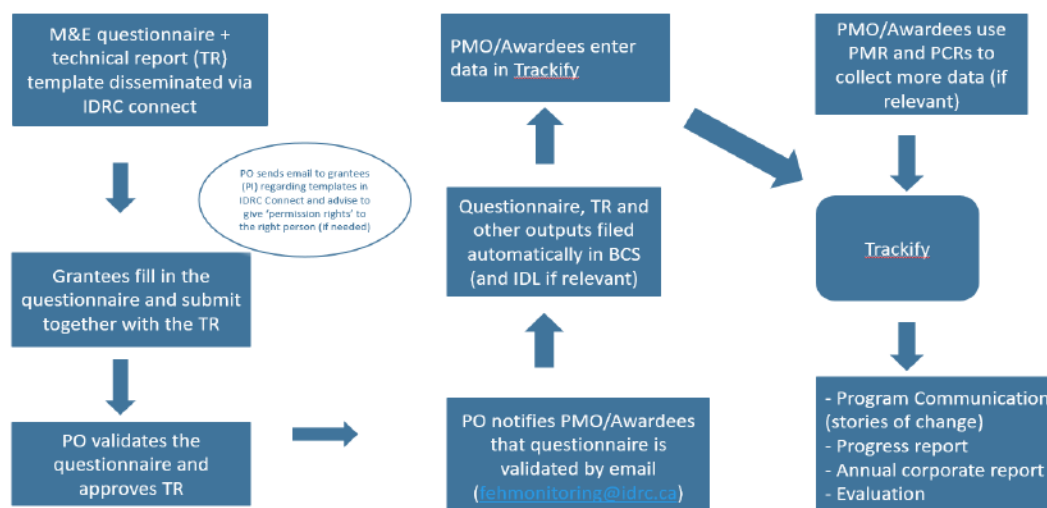
Category	Indicator	Amount
Activities	# of emerging research leaders supported on NCDs and NTDs	7
	# of graduate students FEH	100
	# of interventions assessed or implemented by the project that address equity gaps	12
	# of media citations	39
	# of peer reviewed and open-access peer-reviewed articles	121
	# of projects that include economic analysis to support action on NCDs and NTDs	5
	# of thought leaders supported	24
	# of transformative organizations supported	1
Innovation	# NCD and NTD-related of innovations being widely used and adopted	14
	# of individuals benefiting from the innovation	11,101
	# of innovations assessed or tested by the project for effectiveness	21
Policy	# of evidence-based policy processes or policy debates that the project influenced or informed	49
	# of new international/multinational NCD or NTD policies implemented and/or existing policies changed	6
	# of new local/municipal/district NCD or NTD policies implemented and/or existing policies changed	2
	# of new national NCD or NTD policies implemented and/or existing policies changed	21
	# of new provincial/sub-national NCD or NTD policies implemented and/or existing policies changed	1
	# of policies assessed by the project for their effectiveness	20

To complement this monitoring annex, PCR and PMR are also used to monitor program indicators, which all feed into the IDRC's *Trackify* database. *Trackify* serves a source of quantitative and qualitative data on the program's achievements in relation to its results framework and key program performance data. However in its current state, it mainly contains predominantly FEH legacy projects, with the majority inputted in July 2017 (IDRC, 2018). In order to analyze these *Trackify* results, FEH colleagues had to prepare and pull this information based on the sampled legacy projects given challenges with its usability.

Therefore, only 21 (66% coming from LAC alone) of the 43 sampled projects were included – see *Table 3* above.

The recent implementation of *Trackify* across the IDRC demonstrates a growing culture of using indicators to monitor programming. *“We have room for improving how we collect data and like project management and the systems we use and the processes like PCRs and reports and may have had their own raison d’être at some point and that is not necessarily the case at the moment because of new improvements in the system and program structure that are different from four years ago actually”* (IDRC staff). A series of benefits are envisioned with faster and easier collection of information for annual reporting to the Board, the preparation of communication stories (i.e. using its “gold nugget” feature) and the recently devised *IDRC Connect* to be used in conjunction with key documents present in the data repository *SharePoint*. However, in its current form, *Trackify* demands a significant amount of effort from the team to consolidate monitoring data from grantees into this newer system as shown in *Figure 7*:

Figure 7. Steps to inputting grantee-level information into FEH monitoring systems



Given the wealth of project-level data and information being collected by the FEH team, this “dispersed and heavy workload” for the FEH team is certainly a challenge (IDRC, 2015). Even though close attention was put towards these outputs for annual planning processes, *“I think it’s really time for us at the centre level and also FEH to not impose the way we ... the processes and the way we think which I feel can improve the way we work”* (IDRC staff). Better utilization of *Trackify* and its accompanying data repository (i.e. *SharePoint*) to track indicators across programs should be considered to facilitate learning about impact across project and program themes, outcomes areas (policy and practice influence, generation of new knowledge, and enhancing research capacity) and strategic issues:

“How to take credit for impact and how soon can we expect to see any impact? I think that has been the challenge when we are speaking to our board members or even speaking to other funders who are used to hearing about number of lives saved and people reach x, y, z. It’s a bit different for us because we are focusing on the policy and that really is an intermediate outcome and hopefully along the line it’ll translate to impact. So I’ll say we’re midway in terms of how we’re doing. I’ll say we’re doing well but it will take time really I think to see the full fruits of our labours” (IDRC staff).

Furthermore, we recommend that more time be invested to allow for *“interactive learning which is done through team meetings and other informal forums and we have these structured learning conversation whether that’s through workshops with projects or internal brainstorming on we’re going to do a new project, how do we do this, what are we taking forward, it’s a **fantastic transfer of knowledge** and we really do rely on our colleagues to do this”* (IDRC staff). Therefore, we recommend that further support on monitoring and evaluation for the FEH program would be valuable moving forward.

Indeed, FEH has been unable to adequately measure the outcomes and impact of funded work, requiring more intentional focus on such measurements across all levels. Our findings suggest a need to streamline indicators to meaningfully measure relevant outcomes and impacts across all levels: program, project, and grant monitoring (i.e. IDRC’s CRM system used to track investments and grant recipients given certain regions of focus). According to grantees, there is a need for consolidated, clear, simple indicators using simplified methods to monitor, evaluate and compare changes in the food systems/environment, and to also measure the difficulties of implementation in public policies. The inherent challenges of measuring policy influences, changes in public policy and the often difficult political and social settings in which the research is conducted should also be considered. *“The major challenge FEH has is to manage different countries and different cultures. Things do not work similarly across many of these countries and I think that’s a big challenge”* (Grantee). That said, IDRC’s awareness of the political and social context is also valued by its grant recipients – *“one of our challenges is the process of connecting the research timing with the political timing and I think IDRC has a very good flexibility to understand that these processes are not always happening at the same time or when we need it”* (Grantee).

As a consequence of not having adequate measures of outcome and impact, the dissemination of FEH results is in turn hindered. NCDP’s evaluation recommendations highlighted similar limitations in terms of visibility, with results not published in an easy to access format that could serve to influence policy within the context of the project/country or for a wider audience (i.e. beyond a given research community of practice). As pointed out by Grantees, *“the challenge will be to take the findings and disseminate to the right stakeholders and that’s I think the aspect, the scope of dissemination that we have to consider”*, and to consider the importance of cross-country learning and collaboration around sharing intellectual resources across borders, particularly in LMICs. An IDRC colleague also confirms the need of *“putting more links in between researchers and advocacy players, also policy players and well with the community of practice we intend to systematize the learnings and the tools for putting them available for all the countries.”* Even from a partner perspective, an interviewee highlighted the *“lost opportunity of not easily finding”* different articles produced within projects that were already closed. Therefore, the call for more systematic capture of research and policy findings based on defined measures of program outcomes and impact still prevails as IDRC is often not credited for their contributions through visible engagement.

Annex 3: List of acronyms and references

AE – Agriculture and Environment	IPCAM – Intergovernmental Commission of the Initiative to eliminate Chagas transmission in Central America countries and Mexico
AMR – Anti-Microbial Resistance	JPIAMR – Joint Programming Initiative on Antimicrobial Resistance
AUB – American University of Beirut	LAC – Latin America and the Caribbean
CIHR – Canadian Institutes of Health Research	LMIC – Low and middle-income country
Co-PI – Co-Principal Investigator	M&E – Monitoring and Evaluation
CRUK – Cancer Research United Kingdom	MENA – Middle East and Northern Africa
CSO – Civil Society Organizations	NCD – Non-communicable Diseases
DCE – Discrete Choice Experimental (Design)	NCDP – Non-Communicable Disease Prevention Program
DNDi – Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative	NIH – National Institutes of Health
EcoHealth – Ecosystems and Human Health Program	NTD – Neglected tropical diseases
EQ – Evaluation Questions	PAD – Project Approval Document
ETC – Economics of Tobacco Control	PAR – Project Approval Report
FB – Field building	PCR – Project completion report
FEH – Food, Environment, and Health	PI – Principal investigator
FIAP – Feminist international Assistance Policy	PMR – Project monitoring report
Food-EPI – Healthy Food Environment Policy Index	PO – Program Officer (FEH staff)
GACD – Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases	RP – Research project
GAIN – Global Alliance for Improved	RSP – Research support project
GloPID-R – Global Research Collaboration for Infectious Disease Preparedness	SDC – Swiss Development and Cooperation
GO – Governmental Organizations	SDG – Sustainable Development Goal
ID – Infectious Diseases	SSA – Sub-Saharan Africa
IDEC – Institute of Consumer Defense	SSB – Sugared-sweetened beverage
IDRC – International Development Research Centre	SSHRC – Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
IECS – Instituto de Efectividad Clínica y Sanitaria	TC – Tobacco Control
INFORMAS – International Network for Food and Obesity / Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs) Research, Monitoring and Action Support	TR – Technical Report
	VSV-Ebola – Vesicular Stomatitis Virus-Ebola
	WHO – World Health Organization
	UofT – University of Toronto

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Annex 4: List of documents reviewed for the evaluation

Categories	Details of Document Review			
Program Level	<u>FEH Strategy documentation:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A&E Implementation Plan IDRC Strategic Plan FEH Implementation Plan Program synthesis briefs (per thematic aim) Regional strategies (Asia, LAC, MENA and SSA) Annual reports to the Board (2016-2017-2018) 	<u>Monitoring & Evaluation:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome-indicator framework Guidelines for preparing final technical reports Workbooks (per thematic aim) Donor partnership round-up List of peer-reviewed publications List of NCD investments FEH Evaluation and Monitoring System Powerpoint Key milestones and decisions 	<u>Call for proposals and concept notes:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ID: JPIAMR, Aedes Control Technologies FS: policies and market innovations for NCD prevention TC: economics of TC in LMICs 	<u>Other:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop reports (Asia, LAC) Consultant reports: CCGHR, Consultation to Support Development of Global Health Strategy at IDRC, Exploring the value of and opportunities for increasing research programming on adolescent diets and food environments for the prevention of NCDs 2018
ASIA Project-level	<u>Project numbers:</u> 108163, 108557, 108817, 108994	<u>Status of 4 projects:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% Committed 50% Closed 	<u>Overview of documents analysed:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% PAD/PAR 50% Final/Technical/Interim/Project Monitoring/Supplement/extension reports 25% Final revised proposal & PCR 	
LAC Project-level	<u>Project numbers:</u> 106905, 107459, 107577, 107604, 107730, 107731, 108162, 108164, 108166, 108168, 108170, 108179, 108180, 108410, 108442, 108571, 108643, 108646, 108651, 108690	<u>Status of 20 projects:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 45% Committed 55% Closed 	<u>Overview of documents analysed:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% PAD/PAR 55% Interim Reports 40% PCR 35% Monitoring Questionnaire 25% Supplement/extension report 	
MENA Project-level	<u>Project numbers:</u> 106981, 108641, 108642, 108821, 108992	<u>Status of 5 projects:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60% Committed 40% Closed 	<u>Overview of documents analysed:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% PAD/PAR 40% Monitoring Reports 	
SSA Project-level	<u>Project numbers:</u> 107345, 107942, 108121, 108424, 108458, 108657, 108775	<u>Status of 7 projects:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 86% Committed 14% Closed 	<u>Overview of documents analysed:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% PAD/PAR 29% Interim technical report & PMR 14% Technical report/Final Report & PCR 	
Canada Project-level	<u>Project numbers:</u> 108163, 108557, 108817, 108994	<u>Status of 4 projects:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40% Committed 60% Closed 	<u>Overview of documents analysed:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% PAD/PAR 50% Interim/Final/Technical Report & PMR 50% Supplement/extension report 25% Final Revised Proposal 	
Global Project-level	<u>Project numbers:</u> 106888, 108016, 108238, 108578, 108965	<u>Status of 5 projects:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% Committed 50% Closed 	<u>Overview of documents analysed:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% PAD/PAR 50% Final/Technical Reports 	

A list of links and documents for the FEH 2015-2019 evaluation was provided by FEH program staff. The documents are saved on IDRC's filing system Basic Content System (BCS) which is based on the platform SharePoint. The

documents are specifically contained on the Food, environment and Health site. Some documents and templates are available in English and French. The documents cover broader IDRC strategies, program overviews, program strategies, and evaluation resources to help you as you develop your assessment frameworks.

IDRC and Agriculture and Environment (AE) documentation: [IDRC's Strategic Plan 2015-2020, AE implementation Plan, AE report to the Board – Nov. 2018](#)

General FEH documentation: [External evaluation, NCDP program 2010-2015](#), [External evaluation, Ecohealth program 2010-2015](#), [Summary of External review recommendations](#), [External evaluation, Ecohealth Capacity building](#), [FEH implementation plan](#), [Overall FEH synthesis](#), [List of projects 2015 -2019](#), [Program timeline](#), [Partnerships table](#) and [slide](#), [FEH Results framework](#), [Small Globe Discuss guide](#), [Development of Global Health Strategy at IDRC](#) (Nancy Edwards' report), [Exploring the value of and opportunities for increasing research programming on adolescent diets and food environments for the prevention of NCDs](#)

Food systems (FS): [FS Impact pathway](#), [FS synthesis](#), [First FS Call](#), [Africa strategy](#), [Closed call – Africa](#), [Asia strategy](#), [LAC strategy](#), [MENA strategy](#), Project #109035 "Building a Community of Practice for Healthier Food Systems in LAC" – [Research proposal](#) (the project is expected to be approved by the end of this quarter).

Infectious Diseases (ID): [ID Impact pathway](#), [ID synthesis](#), [Ebola 2014/2015 – Ebola clinical trial project \(PAD\)](#), [Rapid Ebola Response Initiative: Call document](#), [JPIAMR Call](#), [CIHR – IDRC Partnership on Zika prevention and management](#), [Joint Call](#), [Aedes transmitted diseases](#), [Call, PAD](#) to support two winning proposals, [Chagas Project Project Approval Document](#) (PAD), [1st tech report](#) EXEC SUMM USAC (Guatemala), [1st tech report DNDi](#)

Tobacco Control (TC): [TC Impact pathway](#), [TC synthesis](#), [Donor agreement between IDRC – CRUK](#), [Economics of Tobacco Control Initiative](#), [ETC Call for concept notes](#), [Interim report CRUK](#).

Gender: Bilkis' report: [Seeking and Advancing Gender Equity transformation within Food Systems Research](#), [Gender@Work report](#), [Gender Annex](#)

Building the field of Foods systems research in LMICs: [LAC field building workshop – RSP and final report](#), [Africa field building workshop – RSP and final report](#), [Asia field building workshop – RSP and final report](#).

Mid-term self-assessment: [FS workbook](#), [ID workbook](#), [TC workbook](#)

Monitoring strategies and Tools: [Project monitoring questionnaire](#), [Gender Annex](#), [PPT on Trackify](#)

Evaluation and frameworks for evaluating research for development (Note: the links below are accessible):

Evaluating policy influence: <https://www.idrc.ca/en/book/knowledge-policy-making-most-development-research>, plus resources from ODI: <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/6453.pdf> and <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/10259.pdf>; Evaluating capacity building <https://www.idrc.ca/en/research-in-action/capacity-building-2008>; in particular the "Research into use framework: 5 categories of capacity development at IDRC" - <https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/handle/10625/52303>; Assessing research quality for development research: <https://www.idrc.ca/en/research-in-action/research-quality-plus>; [Guide to formatting Evaluation Reports for IDRC](#)

- a. Guide to [Quality Assessment of IDRC Evaluation Reports](#) (Guideline No. 4)
- b. [OECD/DAC \(2010\) Quality Standards for Development Evaluation](#)
- c. [IDRC's evaluation webpage](#) and [Approach to Evaluation](#)

University of Toronto

FINAL EVALUATION DESIGN

IDRC Evaluation: Food, Environment, and Health Program Evaluation 2015-2020

INTRODUCTION

The ultimate goal of the Food, Environment and Health (FEH) program is to improve the health of low- and middle-income country populations, by generating evidence, innovations and policies that reduce the health and economic burdens of preventable chronic and infectious diseases⁶. The program achieves this goal through investments that aim to build research capacity, increase knowledge and innovation and influence policy in strategic thematic areas aimed at preventing and reducing the rising health burden from non-communicable diseases (NCD). By targeting the major risk factors and drivers of the global, food-related, NCD pandemic, the FEH program has a primary focus on influencing shifts in local food systems and dietary trends towards healthier diets (more nutritious and less processed foods, particularly those high in fat, sugar and salt). Complementary work will focus on tobacco as a major contributor to the global NCD burden, and will take to scale and build upon the success of former tobacco control research supported through previous IDRC programs and others. The program will also retain targeted investments on the prevention and control of infectious diseases driven by social and environmental change which continue to perennially and unexpectedly threaten the health and security of low- and middle-income populations.

The FEH program portfolio is diverse, ranging from research that influences the design, implementation and impact assessment of public policy interventions and multi-sector actions for addressing detrimental effects of unhealthy diets, to the tackling of social and environmental determinants of infectious and non-communicable diseases, contributing to address the burden of disease through primary and secondary prevention approaches.

SCOPE OF EVALUATION

The purpose of this evaluation is to provide evidence and recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of IDRC's FEH strategic body of research programming. Although FEH pursued three concurrent aims during its first program cycle, the proposed evaluation will primarily focus on the theme - *prevention of food-related chronic diseases*, targeting the major risk factors and drivers of the global, food-related, NCD pandemic, with an emphasis on influencing shifts in local and national food systems and dietary trends towards healthier and sustainable diets in low- and middle-income- country populations. The prevention and control of selected infectious diseases and tobacco control policies will be a complementary focus as both are building upon the body of knowledge, leadership and success of prior research supported by past IDRC funding, namely the Ecosystems and Human Health Program (Ecohealth) and Non-Communicable Disease Prevention Program (NCDP).

The planned outputs from this evaluation will contribute evidence on the effectiveness of FEH's strategic body of research programming in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. It will also provide insights on progress made in supporting gender equity sensitive research, Southern-led research coalitions and research efforts to strengthen high-impact policy interventions and innovations

⁶ Food, Environment and Health: Implementation Plan 2015-2020.

targeting population health determinants, and enhancing environmental sustainability and coordinated partnership development between private and public sectors and the international funder community.

Audiences: The intended audiences or users of the evaluation will be:

- Primary: IDRC's Board of Governors and Management;
- Secondary: FEH Program team;
- Tertiary: Grantees, research community, general public, current and future funding partners.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

This summative evaluation of the FEH program aims to demonstrate the accountability of its investments by articulating results and providing insights on progress made throughout the program's lifecycle in order to guide future programming and enhance outcomes. Based on IDRC guidance, the FEH evaluation will be conducted at the *program* level, meaning that it will:

- Address the results that matter to the FEH Program;
- Examine how the FEH Program strategies translate along their impact pathway toward development outcomes including forging partnerships;
- Address the program portfolio as a whole, providing a clear rationale for any sampling strategy;
- Include independent judgement from the U of T evaluation team.

Key evaluation lines of inquiry can be grouped into two areas of focus: program strategy and program outcomes, in line with the following evaluation questions:

Area of focus	Evaluation questions
Program strategy	Given the context, risks and opportunities that emerged over the period, how well has FEH implemented a strategic body of research programming in the identified thematic areas of programming?
	How effectively has FEH integrated the following strategic issues* into their programming?
	The FEH program has emerged from years of IDRC experience, how well has the program done to learn from previous work?
Program outcomes	What contributions (intended and unintended, and in various "spheres") has FEH made to influence/effect policy/practice, enhance research capacity, and increase new knowledge?
	How has the inclusion of four strategic issues* influenced outcomes of policy/practice, research capacity, and the generation of new knowledge? If so, how has it influenced these outcomes?
	What are the most relevant and significant opportunities for FEH moving forward?

Strategic issues include iterative, cross-cutting topics that address either corporate (IDRC) or FEH program-level priorities:

1. **Scale** refers to being at optimal scale versus scaling up interventions. A separate ongoing evaluation is already looking further into its definition and application across IDRC;
2. **Southern leadership** as one of its core priorities. This fits well with IDRC's corporate priority to "Build the leaders of tomorrow". The FEH Program is providing these leaders with regional platforms and organizational support to increase the impact of their past work. Another ongoing evaluation is exploring the importance of this theme across the organisation;

3. **Partnerships** in terms of IDRC being a “partner of choice” to other funding organizations, and understanding the role of partnerships with other funders and their influence on delivering core FEH program objectives and on programmatic decisions;
4. **Gender and equity** integrated more recently in IDRC and FEH programming, with the goal of ensuring that no projects are “gender blind”.
5. **Environmental Sustainability** - an emerging strategic issue is how the FEH program links with other areas of IDRC programming such as Climate Change and Food Security, and how it pursues co-funding opportunities for research at the intersection of nutrition and climate change, as it seeks to position its work within the broader frame of environmental sustainability.

Key *evaluative* inputs will include FEH Impact Pathways, IDRC-developed evaluation frameworks on research quality and scale, as well as past evaluations.

As a result, the following evaluation matrix summarizes potential sub-questions, key considerations, examples of indicators (**drawn from the current set of indicators from FEH’s Implementation Plan – note that additional qualitative indicators will be added in due course**) and data sources for each of the evaluation questions:

	Evaluation questions	Initial guiding sub-questions	Considerations	Example indicators ⁷	Data sources
PROGRAM STRATEGY	1) Given the context, risks and opportunities that emerged over the period, how well has FEH implemented a strategic body of research programming in the identified thematic areas of programming?	<p>What is the internal and external operating context for the FEH program?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within IDRC • Canada (funding, partners) • Global research funding landscape • Global NCDs and food systems landscape 	Explore the framing, positioning and legitimacy of the FEH program within (e.g. other IDRC program leads) and outside of IDRC (e.g. with grantees, current and prospective partners)		<p>Analysis of FEH data based on list of key documents provided by IDRC (see Annex 2)</p> <p>Key informant interviews with IDRC and FEH staff</p>
		<p>What risks have emerged since 2015 for the FEH program? Internal and external?</p> <p>Which opportunities have emerged since 2015 for the FEH program?</p> <p>Which emerging priorities in Global Health are being addressed by the FEH program? How well have these emerging priorities been addressed?</p> <p>How are these risks, opportunities and emerging priorities influencing program coherence?</p>			<p>Landscape assessment</p> <p>Literature review</p> <p>Input on this from grant recipients and collaborating formal and informal funding/ multilateral actors (e.g. WHO/ PAHO) could provide a richer picture (of course need to consider feasibility)</p>

⁷ Example indicators are drawn from the current set of indicators from FEH's Implementation Plan – note that additional qualitative indicators will be added in due course.

	<p>(Cont.) 1) Given the context, risks and opportunities that emerged over the period, how well has FEH implemented a strategic body of research programming in the identified thematic areas of programming?</p>	<p>What enabling/facilitating role(s) has the FEH program played in building the field of food systems in LMICs (in particular)?</p> <p>What strategies has the program put in place to invest strategically (e.g. calls for proposals, monitoring approaches, etc.). How did IDRC and FEH become thought leaders and field builders?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What kinds of infrastructure, capacity building, knowledge translation, human leadership were invested in? 2) How did the FEH program enable/facilitate field building? 3) What partnerships among strategic actors and funders were brokered? <p>What barriers have impeded the program's ability to implement a strategic body of research programming?</p>	<p>Nature, scope, degree of coherence (strategic body) of FEH programming activities (e.g. How is the "environment" component of FEH being conceptualized, and addressed?)</p> <p>Awareness and perceived effectiveness of FEH program's role(s)</p> <p>Probe themes that surfaced in the initial document review by exploring how the FEH program is viewed within and outside of IDRC, identify any "marker events" or other factors that catalyzed a strategic body of research programming in the three thematic areas</p> <p>Leadership and championship of the FEH program has occurred and changed over time – reflecting on what "staying the course" means – reflections on what leadership and championing means in the context of the FEH program, and what that</p>		
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			has meant and will mean for the FEH program going forward		
		<p>What does success look like?</p> <p>What does successful (or effective) incorporation look like in each of these areas?</p> <p>In terms of coherence of the FEH portfolio, what do the project clusters share? How have they built on one another? E.g., "Coherence at the cost of what?" How do they complement each other?</p>	Examine coherence and complementarity from different perspectives (e.g. corporate, program, grant recipients). Account for different scientific disciplinary perspectives		
		How has the FEH program's strategy been realized through the body of research programming?	Degree of alignment with IDRC corporate objectives, program objectives, aspirations		
	2) How effectively has FEH integrated the following strategic issues	What does successful (or effective) incorporation look like for scale?			Analysis of FEH data based on list of key documents

	<p>into their programming?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Scale -Southern leadership -Partnerships -Gender and equity 	How has scale been incorporated or operationalized into FEH programming?	<p>Scaling Science: Scaling is a coordinated effort to achieve a collection of impacts at optimal scale that is only undertaken if it is both morally justified and warranted by the dynamic evaluation of evidence.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Coordination 2) Optimal scale 3) Moral justification 4) Dynamic evaluation 		<p>provided by IDRC (see Annex 2)</p> <p>Key informant interviews with IDRC and FEH staff, grant recipients</p> <p>Landscape assessment</p> <p>Literature review</p>
		What does successful (or effective) incorporation look like in terms of Southern leadership?	For e.g. Develop, support and help establish Southern led consortia (networks, centres of excellence and other multi-actor partnerships) to prevent and control priority infectious diseases		
		How has Southern leadership been incorporated into FEH programming?			

<p>(Cont.) 2) How effectively has FEH integrated the following strategic issues into their programming?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Scale -Southern leadership -Partnerships -Gender and equity 	<p>What has been the influence on, and of funder partnerships?</p> <p>Why and how are partnerships happening? Under what conditions?</p>		<p><i>Qualitative indicators will added to capture the nature of partnering by FEH, partnership mutuality (e.g. mutual benefits of partnering, how partners influence each other)</i></p> <p><i>Examples of existing indicators:</i></p> <p><i>Number of funded projects that produce evidence on the effectiveness of tobacco-control interventions for NCD prevention</i></p> <p><i>Number of international and national donors are aware of and recognize IDRC's contributions to the emerging field of food systems and health</i></p> <p><i>Added value of new partnerships, commitments or related agreements (e.g. MOUs) to develop and scale up interventions to prevent and control priority infectious diseases</i></p>	
			<p><i>Funding interests from other donors are identified and partnership negotiations initiated</i></p> <p><i>Number of global agencies, decision-makers and donors which cite FEH programming on priority infectious diseases</i></p>	
	<p>What does successful (or effective) incorporation look like in terms of gender and equity?</p>		<p><i>Number of funded projects that identify equity gaps (social, gender, economic) and make recommendations to address and lessen them</i></p>	
	<p>How have gender and equity been incorporated into FEH programming?</p>		<p><i>Number of food system analyses in LMICs providing evidence on the state of people's diets and associated health and economic burdens (disaggregated by sex and socio-economic status)</i></p>	

	3) The FEH program has emerged from years of IDRC experience, how well has the program done to learn from previous work?	What mechanisms are in place to facilitate learning? Are they working/not working?			Recommendations from previous IDRC Program evaluations
		How well has the FEH program incorporated feedback from past evaluations and lessons learned from building other fields into current programming? How are past lessons learned engaged when making decisions?	Evidence of lessons learned being incorporated into program planning FEH staff extent of learning from past IDRC efforts		Key informant interviews with IDRC and FEH staff
PROGRAM OUTCOMES	4) What contributions in various “spheres” ⁸ (control, influence, interest) has the FEH program made to influence/effect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy/ • practice 	What contributions (intended and unintended) in various “spheres” has FEH made to influence/effect policy/practice?	Research Plus– 1. Research Integrity: assessment of appropriateness (alignment of funded projects to strategic FEH objectives) 2. Research Legitimacy: extent to which research results have been produced by a process	<i>Number of countries where municipal and national policymakers are engaged in policy development and adoption to change food systems that improve diets and prevent non-communicable diseases</i> <i>Number of countries that contribute to the introduction of new taxation and other tobacco control policies to reduce the health and economic burdens of NCDs at the population level.</i>	Analysis of FEH data based on list of key documents provided by IDRC (see Annex 2) Key informant interviews Case studies

⁸ A three-fold distinction is used to represent, understand and appraise the collective view on research excellence across IDRC. Sphere of control refers to matters over which IDRC staff members have some say: through interaction during the conceptualization, proposal assessment, and refinement stage, IDRC staff and grantees share control over the research design. Sphere of influence relates to changes in insight, relationships, and behavior among users of the research—e.g., researchers, development practitioners, the media, policy makers— as a result of, or influenced by, the combined contributions of IDRC staff and their grantees. IDRC staff actions can exert some influence but not determine outcomes (these are matters traditionally referred to as the “use” and/or “influence”¹⁰ of research that include, but are not limited to, policy change). Sphere of interest refers to socio-economic, political, and environmental trends and endstates (e.g., poverty reduction as a result of policy change). These are matters traditionally referred to as “impact.” From “Understanding Research Excellence at IDRC: Final Report”, by Zenda Ofir and Tom Schwandt, 2012. Available at: <https://www.idrc.ca/sites/default/files/sp/Documents%20EN/RE-study-Understanding-RE-at-IDRC-full-report.pdf>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research capacity • New knowledge <p>(Cont.) 4) What contributions in various “spheres” (control,</p>		<p>that took account of the concerns and insights of relevant stakeholders and was deemed procedurally fair and based on the values, concerns and perspectives of that audience. Audiences tend to judge legitimacy based on who participated, who did not, the process for making choices, and how information was produced, vetted and disseminated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing negative consequences • Gender responsiveness • Inclusiveness • Engagement with local knowledge 	<p><i>Number of policies, programs, and community behaviors/practices which are guided by research results and health interventions</i></p> <p><i>Number of grantees (Sex disaggregated) engage in public debates (including media coverage) and/or policy dialogues (e.g. through expert groups, task forces, policy-drafting committees)</i></p>	
	<p>What contributions (intended and unintended) in various “spheres” has FEH made to enhance research capacity?</p>		<p><i>Number of newly trained researchers and number of experienced researchers (sex disaggregated) or institutions contributing to tobacco control and NCD prevention research for the first time</i></p> <p><i>Number of multidisciplinary and/or consortium teams conducting research in this field</i></p>	

influence, interest) has the FEH program made to influence/effect			<i>Number of research teams actively engaging with important stakeholders (from government, civil society, and private sectors) throughout the course of the projects, resulting in project results being considered or used by various actors</i>	
	What contributions (intended and unintended) in various “spheres” has FEH made to enhance new knowledge?		<i>Number of knowledge outputs (peer-reviewed publications, presentations, reports, etc.) that describe the causes, impacts and solutions of targeted diseases (e.g. social, environmental, economic or other epidemiological drivers of disease; burden of disease information disaggregated by gender, age, ethnic group or other socio-economic condition; health and economic impact assessment of interventions)</i> <i>Number of tools developed (or adapted) for tobacco-control research (that allow for sex and socio-economic stats disaggregated data)</i>	
5) How has the inclusion of each of the 4 strategic areas influenced outcomes of policy/practice, research capacity, and the generation of new knowledge? If so, how has it influenced these outcomes?	<p>How effective is the mix of programming in achieving expected outcomes in increasing research capacity, new knowledge and policy/practice influence?</p> <p>Are there synergies (additive, multiplicative) amongst projects funded under the FEH program ? How might these contribute to outcomes in research capacity, generation of new knowledge and influence of policy/practice?</p>		<i>Number of funded projects that produce evidence on the effectiveness of interventions (policies and/or dietary change innovations) for improving nutrition and/or NCD prevention</i> <i>Number of networks (e.g. GloPID-R) which solicit FEH for advice, collaboration, or membership</i> <i>Number of policies, programs, and community behaviors/practices which directly engage or empower vulnerable groups (including women, poor and others) to design, undertake or assess interventions</i>	<p>Analysis of FEH data based on list of key documents provided by IDRC (see Annex 2)</p> <p>Key informant interviews</p> <p>Case studies</p>

				<i>Number of LMIC analysis providing evidence on the state of tobacco use and its associated health and economic burdens (disaggregated by sex and socio-economic status)</i>	
		How has the inclusion of scale influenced outcomes of policy/practice, research capacity, and the generation of new knowledge? If so, how has it influenced these outcomes?			
		How has the inclusion of Southern Leadership influenced outcomes of policy/practice, research capacity, and the generation of new knowledge? If so, how has it influenced these outcomes?		<i>Number of lead researchers (men and women)/consortia...</i>	
		How has the inclusion of partnerships influenced outcomes of policy/practice, research capacity, and the generation of new knowledge? If so, how has it influenced these outcomes?		<i>Number of new partnerships, commitments or related agreements (e.g. MOUs) to develop and scale up of intervention to prevent and control priority infectious diseases</i>	

		How has the inclusion of gender and equity influenced outcomes of policy/practice, research capacity, and the generation of new knowledge? If so, how has it influenced these outcomes?		<i>Number of funded projects that identify equity gaps (social, gender, economic) and make recommendations to address and lessen them</i>	
	6) What are the most relevant and significant opportunities for FEH moving forward?				<p>Analysis of FEH data based on list of key documents provided by IDRC (see Annex 2)</p> <p>Key informant interviews</p> <p>Landscape assessment, literature review</p> <p>Independent judgement of UofT Evaluation Team</p>

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

A multiple-methods approach will be used for this FEH evaluation using qualitative and quantitative methods and diverse data sources. The data collection will be aimed at collecting and triangulating evidence to address all the evaluation questions and making optimal use of existing data since not all programs have baseline data nor their own individual project evaluations. The evaluation timeframe under review is 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2019. The evaluation will provide a “window” into this period 2015-2019 and critical investments that were initiated before 2015, but became significant, strategic pieces of work within this period.

The proposed mixed methods approach will rely on an iterative work process to collect and analyze data. Ethics protocol for this evaluation will be prepared and submitted to the University of Toronto’s Research Ethics Board for approval. The evaluation team will be responsible for abiding to all of the necessary REB requirements.

4.1 Document review

Sources: FEH’s *SharePoint* will be the primary source the evaluation team will access FEH documents. The *Trackify* database for key program performance data is deemed incomplete and will be used to support and triangulate other data sources. **Annex 2** outlines the key documents provided by FEH.

Sample: A purposive sample will be drawn based on the **Sampling Strategy (Annex 5)** that will apply a series of weights across FEH project-types and thematic aims.

Approach: A data extraction template for qualitative and quantitative administrative data and will be prepared and applied to a sample of projects across the FEH program, refined and then implemented across all sampled documents to extract in line with evaluation questions.

A virtual meeting with FEH staff will be planned to ensure all relevant documents (whether in *Sharepoint* or *Trackify*) are taken into account before analysis begins.

Analysis: Statistical software (SPSS, SAS) will be used to build frequency tables and cross-tabulations across strategic issues and regional foci, as well as to summarize quantitative outputs from documents. Qualitative data will be analyzed thematically using NVIVO.

4.2 Key informant interviews

Sources: Key informant interviews will focus on achieving a sample that is sufficiently robust to draw useful and valid inferences from content analysis and build multiple perspectives, insights and contrasts. The evaluation team will conduct one-on-one interviews with:

- Staff members at IDRC administering the FEH program or overseeing it;
- Representatives of organizations who co-fund or parallel fund with the FEH program (i.e. other donor organizations, global policy actors);
- Direct recipients of funding (i.e. grantees and policymakers they engage). Grantees may be in Canada or in a variety of Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) (sub-sample of all projects, including legacy projects, where appropriate).

Sample: The list of Food Environment and Health stakeholders will be provided by IDRC based on the **Sampling Strategy (Appendix 2)**. As a result, a range of 30-50 individuals is planned for, including a mix of partners listed above. Participants will be included if they were connected to the FEH program as staff members, recipients of funding, or FEH program funding partners. They will also be included if they are comfortable taking part in an interview in English (all researchers), French, or Spanish. Participants will be excluded if they do not have a direct connection to FEH and are unable to comment on the program’s effectiveness and outcomes.

Approach: Based on the evaluation matrix, qualitative interview guides will be prepared, adapted to the three different audiences listed above. All interviews will be 45 minutes to one-hour in length and be conducted by a member of the research team.

Potential participants in the interviews will be sent a standard recruitment email including information about the purpose of the independent evaluation, how participants were identified, how evaluation data will be used, contact information for the evaluation team, and University of Toronto's Research Ethics Board Office, and details about what the interview would involve. If they decide to take part, they will receive a consent form in advance of the interview. For in person interviews, they may sign it before the interview when the interviewer verbally reviews the consent form with them. For online interviews, they will be asked to email a signed copy of the form to the interview team in advance of the interview. The interviewer will still review details of the consent form with participants prior to the start of the interview to ensure they fully understand the process. If any participant wishes to not answer a particular question or to withdraw their information after the interview, this will automatically be done without any questions from the evaluation team. The consent form will make it clear that we will be unable to withdraw information from the completed report after August 20th, 2019 and from any technical briefs or other outputs after October 1, 2019.

Evaluation interviews in Ottawa will take place at the IDRC headquarters in a conference room that is familiar to IDRC staff using an audio recorder. Typically, only one interviewer will be present and will also be taking notes. For those taking place on Skype, the interviews will be planned according to participants' schedules and recorded using the Skype software. Interviewers will conduct all interviews in a private space (a closed office or board room). Typically, only one interviewer will be present and will also be taking notes.

Analysis: Matrix analysis techniques will be applied using NVivo statistical software: verbatim narrative data from interview notes will be transcribed and categorized by evaluation questions and indicators into emerging themes, and these themes synthesized into higher order themes for each indicator using deductive thematic content analysis. Detailed notes will also accompany the recordings to verify note accuracies and/or fill in gaps.

4.3 Landscape assessment and literature review

A purposeful review of relevant academic and grey literature (e.g. IDRC commissioned reports) will also be included in the evaluation methodology, including a landscape assessment (as rationale for the different substantive areas of programming, and identification of 'best practices' (for e.g. integration of gender in programming building on IDRC's work. This review will also provide context and evidence for the role of a funding agency like IDRC in supporting research for development in the priority thematic areas of the FEH program. This information will help contextualize and interpret the eventual evaluation findings.

4.4 Case Studies (4-5 anticipated)

For certain aspects of this program evaluation, case studies based on thematic areas of focus will be used to illustrate the ways in which the FEH program's strategy interrelates with program outcomes⁹. The current set of sub-questions provides a range of possible angles that will be further defined, as the evaluation indicators are expanded. The thematic areas of focus will be finalized following initial document review and key informants, potentially looking at a range of cross cutting themes. These could include - how gender and equity are being mainstreamed in FEH programming; using a cluster

⁹ <http://www.pointk.org/resources/files/ProgramEvaluation.pdf>

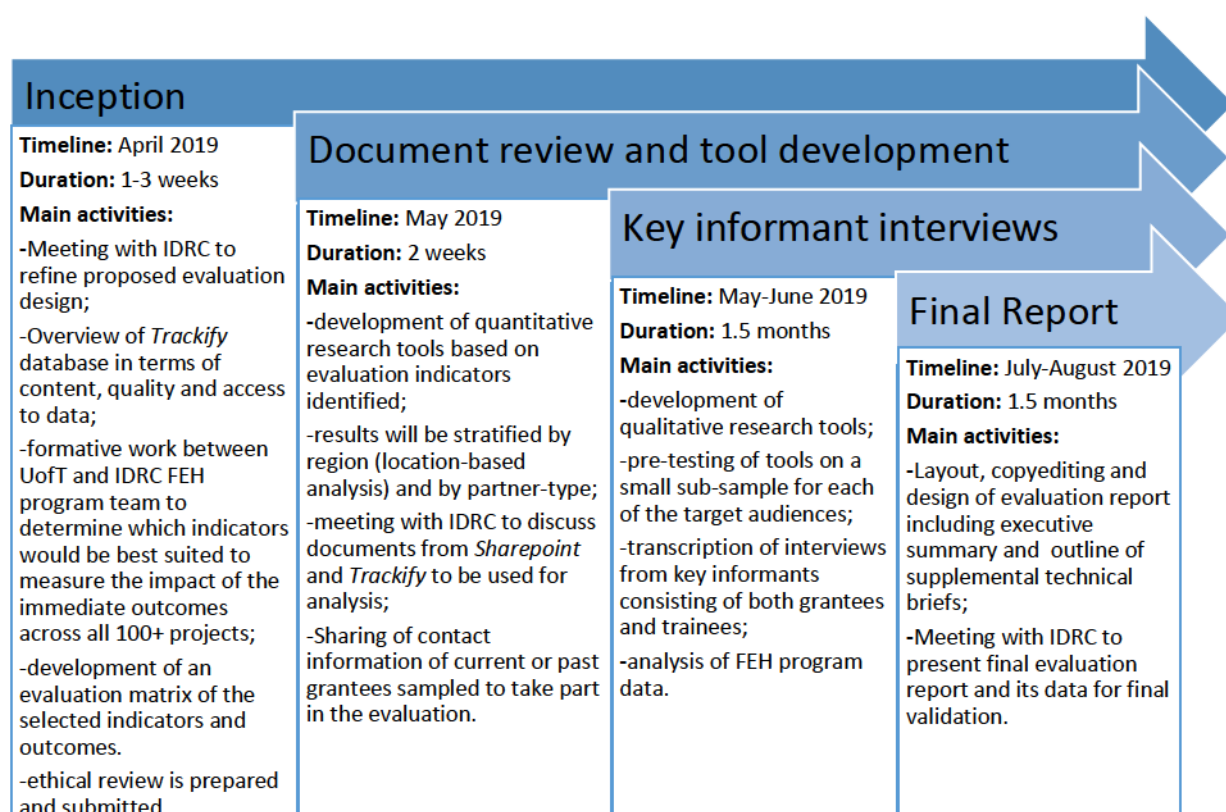
of projects to illustrate the program's approach and contribution to field building and/or scaling; or, its role in policy influence through engagement of a constellation of government, civil society and other actors. Case studies will combine quantitative and qualitative data sources. It may also prove to be a useful approach when studying how IDRC has integrated evaluation findings and other learnings to program design and implementation and with what outcomes¹⁰.

4.5 Triangulation of data

Insights from different data sources will be combined to address each of the evaluation questions. These results will ultimately provide evidence and recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of FEH's strategic body of research programming and its outcomes, and inform the potential way forward for the program (ref. last evaluation above)

EVALUATION TIMELINE

The following study design provides a timeline of the main evaluation activities:



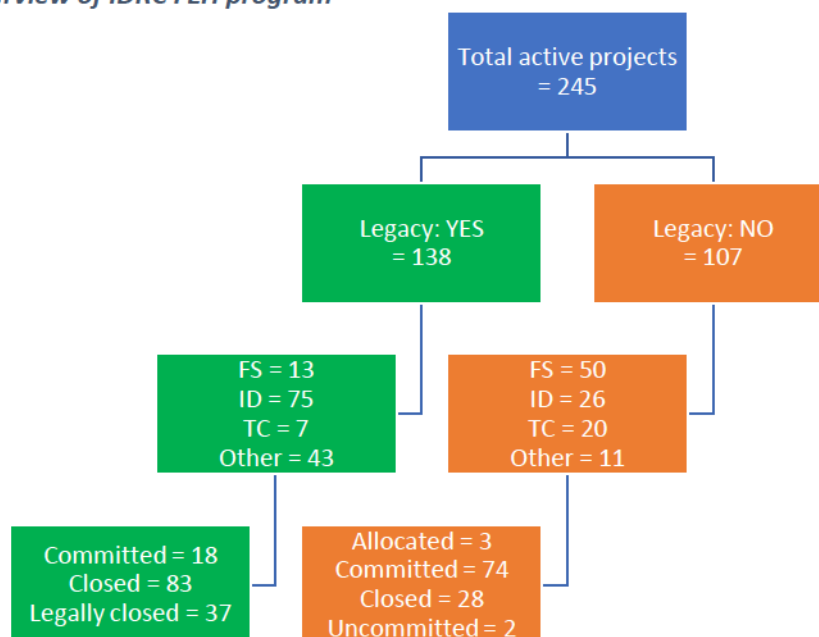
EVALUATION OUTPUTS

In addition to the final report, it will valuable for FEH program and IDRC moving forward to also include a program-level 'map' outlining the interrelationship between projects and overall portfolio approach taken by the FEH program. As the program evaluation unfolds, this 'map' FEH will build a shared understanding among all partners (evaluation team, IDRC staff and program representatives) of the reach and scope of this program.

¹⁰ <https://health-policy-systems.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12961-016-0109-0>

Annex 6: Sampling Strategy and list of selected projects

Figure 1. Overview of IDRC FEH program

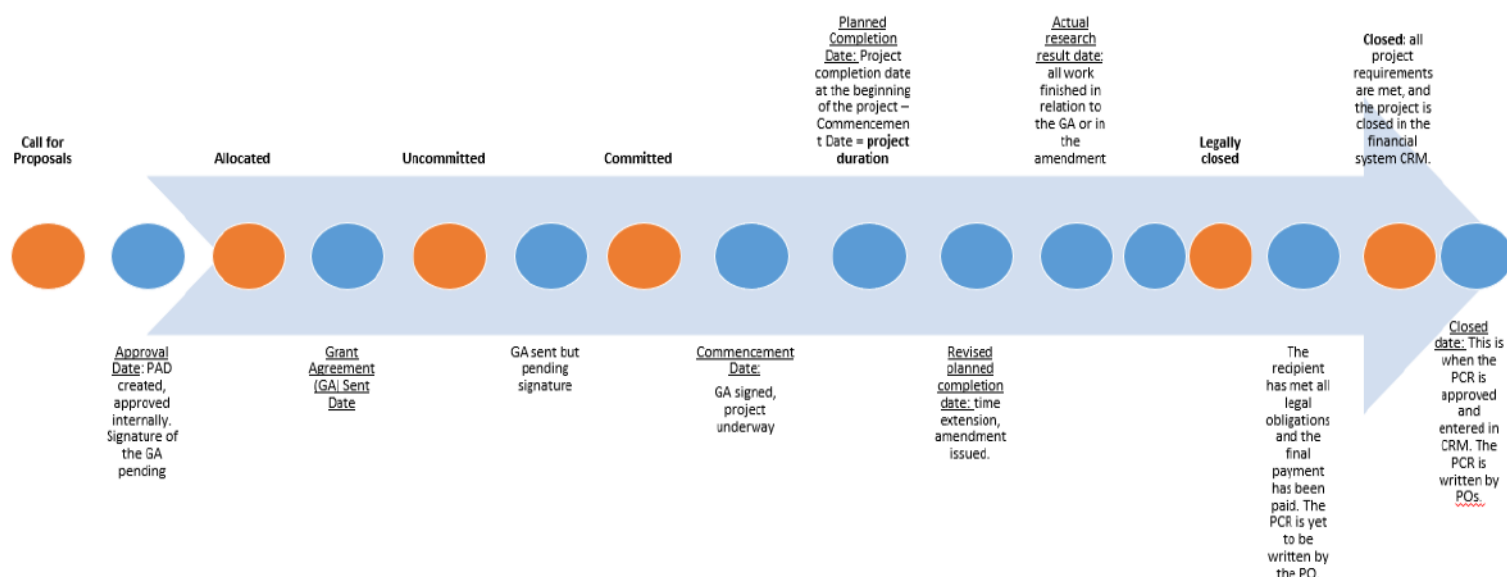


Legend:

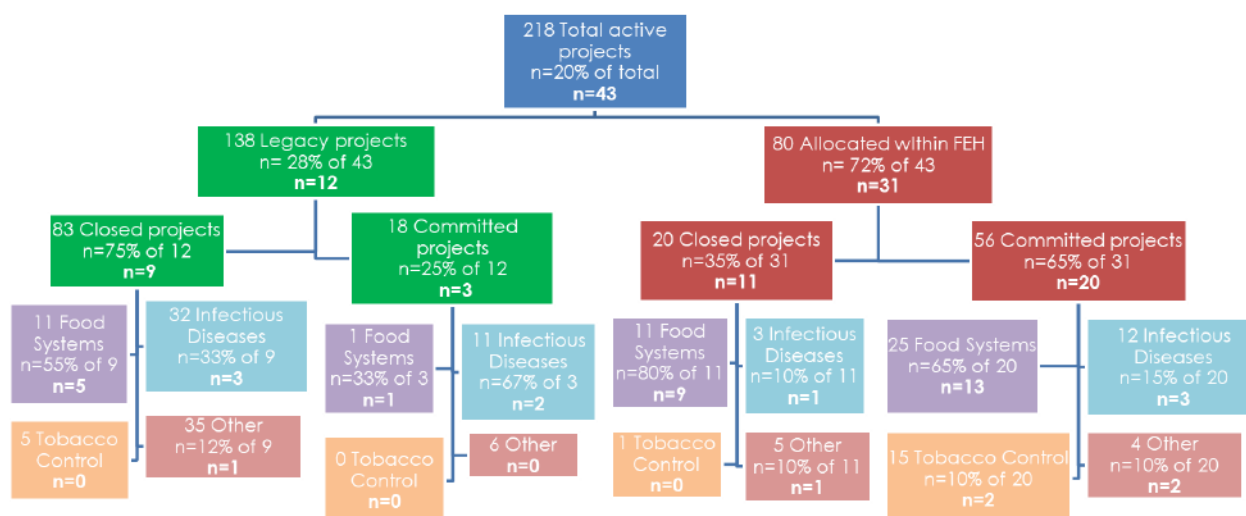
NO legacy: Other = Award, NCD

YES legacy: Other = AL, Award, Ecohealth, Ethics, NCD

Based on the Excel *FEH Projects since April 1st 2015_April 2019*, we have summarized the FEH projects according to legacy, thematic aim (e.g. food systems), and project status (e.g. committed, closed). Taking into account the definitions provided by IDRC, the status of projects follows this sequence:



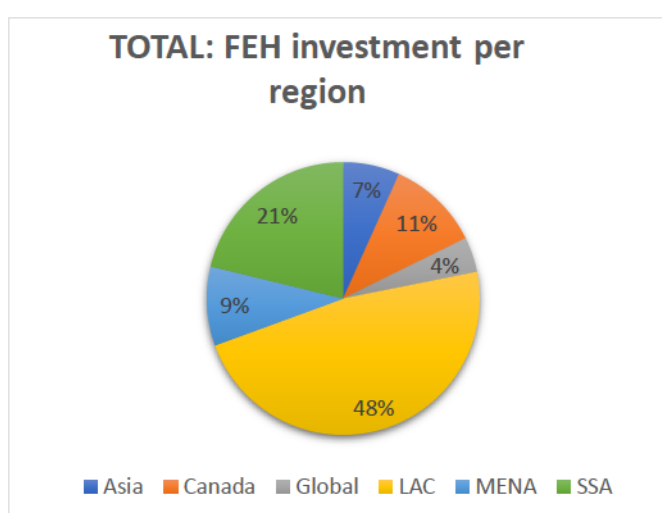
We will be proposing a sample representing one fifth of total amount of projects (n=43) devised based on two separate strategies: one for projects allocated within FEH strategic period (after April 1st 2019) and one for 'legacy' projects that were allocated prior to FEH strategic period:



Based on the drawn sample, we made slight adjustments to ensure adequate representation of all regions:

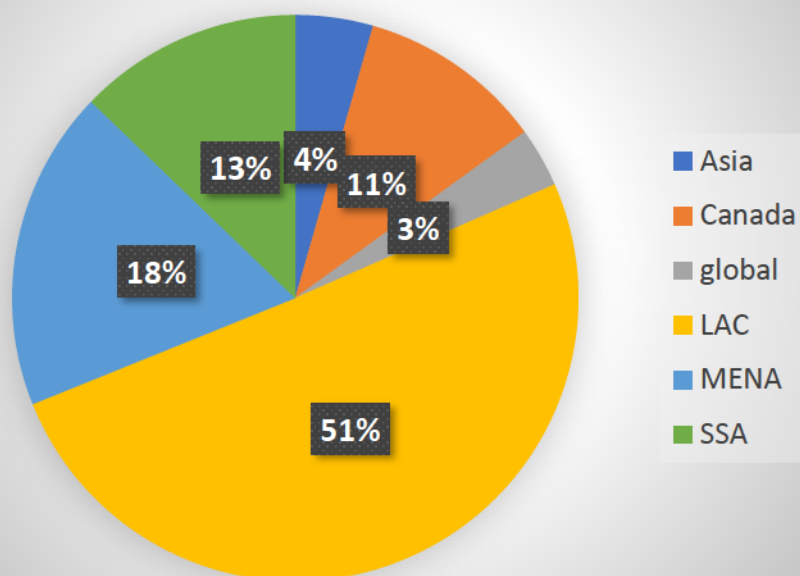
1. All awards were removed as they appear to be used to fund sponsorship activities or travel;
2. Within the Legacy projects, to better align with the distribution of project per region, we made slight adjustments to include two other projects: one from MENA and one from Canada;
3. Within those allocated within FEH, a number of projects did not have assigned regions and therefore based on the location of the recipient and title of the project, we assigned regions accordingly;
4. All aforementioned adjustments were done following the same random procedure based on the size of the investment across projects per category.

The final sample aligns with the breakdown of all FEH investments per region:





Total based on Sample



Annex 7: List of key informants interviewed

Timing Scheduled	Consent Form Received	Name	Title
July 15th 11 am	1	Samantha Nesrallah	Nutritionist
July 15th 2 pm	1	Neena Prasad	Program Lead, Obesity Prevention
July 2nd 2 pm	1	Greg Hallen	Program Leader, FEH
July 2nd 4 pm	1	Christine Jessup	Program Officer, Division of International Training and Research (DITR)
July 3rd 1 pm	1	Zee Leung	Senior Program Officer, FEH
July 3rd 10 am	1	Dr. Marius Kedote	Project Manager
July 3rd 11 am	1	Andres Sanchez	Senior Program Specialist, FEH
July 3rd 2 pm	1	Dominique Charron	VP Programs, IDRC
July 3rd 4 pm	1	Dr. Myriam Paredes	FLACSO
July 3rd 8 am	1	Sam Oti	Senior Program Specialist, FEH
July 4th 10 am	1	Jennifer Gunning	Manager, International Relations
July 4th 8 am	1	Karin Gross	Health Policy Advisor, Global Program Health
July 8 th 11 am	1	Arlene Beeche	Senior Program Specialist, FEH
July 8th 10 am	1	Lisa Burley	Senior Partnership Officer
June 13th 9 am	1	Francine Sinzinkayo	Program Management Officer
June 19th 10:30 am	1	Barry Popkin	W. R. Kenan, Jr. Distinguished Professor
June 20th 8 am	1	Dr. Abdullatif Hussein	Director, Master of Community and Public Health Program
June 21st 1 pm	1	Ana Paula Bortoletto	LÍDER DE PROGRAMA - ALIMENTAÇÃO SAUDÁVEL
June 21st 8 am	1	Tilakavati Karupiah	Strategic Research Interests (SRI) Professor with the Faculty of Health & Medical Sciences, Taylor's University
June 21st 9 am	1	Thi Tho Nguyen	Director NCD, NIHE
June 24th 1 pm	1	Joanne Langley	Professor of Pediatrics and Community Health and Epidemiology; CIHR-GSK Chair in Pediatric Vaccinology
June 24th 10 am	1	Madiha Ahmed	Senior Program Specialist, FEH
June 24th 2 pm	1	David Kelleher	Gender consultant
June 24th 8 am	1	Hala Ghattas	Interim Director, Center for Research on Population and Health, (CRPH)
June 25th 10 am	1	Rima Afifi	Researcher
June 25th 11 am	1	Tatiana Gamboa	University Professor
June 25th 4 pm	1	Bob Williams	Evaluation consultant
June 26th 1:30 pm	1	Stephen Sherwood	Fundación EkoRural
June 26th 2 pm	1	Batal Malek	Director at TRANSNUT, WHO Collaborating Centre on Nutrition Changes and Development
June 28th 10 am	1	Jeff Collin	Professor of Global Health Policy, Global Public Health Unit, Social Policy School of Social & Political Science
June 28th 11 am	1	Camila Corvalan	Coordinator, Center for Research in Food Environments and Nutrition-Related Chronic Diseases
June 28th 2 pm	1	Roberto Bazzani	Senior Program Specialist, FEH
June 28th 9 am	1	Natacha Lecours	Senior Program Officer, FEH

Annex 8: Interview guides

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Preamble:

Thank you for agreeing to speak to us today about your experiences with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC): Food, Environment, and Health (FEH) program. I am interviewing you as part of a University of Toronto team conducting an independent program evaluation of the IDRC's FEH program that will be used to inform future programming efforts. This interview will be approximately one hour in length and will be audio-recorded. These questions serve as a guide only, and we encourage you to speak about any aspect of the topic you wish.

Interviewer reviews the signed consent form with the participant. [In the event the consent form is not signed in advance of the interview, the interviewer first turns on the audio recording and then asks for verbal consent]

**Interviewer confirms that participant is still comfortable with the process. * The interviews are being conducted for the purpose of a program evaluation, thus, all participants will be named and all interviews will be "on the record". If you wish to redact something said in the interview or before the final report is complete, the evaluation team will ensure that any specific item is deleted.*

Do you have any other questions or concerns about the process? If not, let's begin and I will turn on the recording (if not already done so)...

**Interviewer turns on/verifies audio recording* [Make sure sound is clear with microphone].*

Policymaker/Funding Partner/Other Questions

Question	Interviewer Notes	Comments
<p>Tell me a little about your current role with IDRC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Projects partnered with? Investment size? Region? Area of focus? <i>[if relevant - funding contribution?]</i> <p>Can you tell me more about your current relationship with the FEH program?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How are you engaging with IDRC and the FEH program? - Who is your main point of contact? <p>Why did you choose to work with IDRC's FEH program? <i>probe for history and duration of partnership with IDRC</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do you look for in a partnership? - Why are you engaging in this partnership now? - What is unique or different in partnering with IDRC (and the FEH program)? How so? <p>How have you engaged with IDRC as a whole?</p> <p>Can you speak to how your engagement with FEH has contributed to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Influencing policy & practice? 2. Generating new knowledge? 3. Enhancing research capacity? <p>The FEH program has identified 5 strategic issues. These include: gender and equity, working at scale, building southern leadership, partnership and environmental sustainability. In your opinion, how and how well have each of these five strategic issues been addressed through the FEH programming.</p> <p>→ Gender and equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>How has gender and equity been addressed?</i> ◆ <i>How well have gender and equity been addressed?</i> 		

<p>→ Working at scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>How has working at scale been incorporated or operationalized (within your partnership(s))?</i> ◆ <i>How well has working at scale been incorporated?</i> <p>→ Building southern leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>How has building southern leadership been addressed?</i> ◆ <i>How well has building southern leadership been addressed?</i> <p>→ Partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>What is the added value of your partnership with IDRC?</i> ◆ <i>How has this partnership come about?</i> ◆ <i>How well has the partnership been implemented?</i> <p>→ Environmental sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>How do you see the relevance of environmental sustainability in your partnership with the FEH program, the ability or not to address it so far, and/or in future?</i> ◆ <i>How well has environmental sustainability been incorporated into FEH programming?</i> <p>How has IDRC's FEH program contributed to building a field of study? – for e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent do you see FEH approaches being accepted into mainstream health and development thinking, research, policy or practice? - To what extent would FEH-like programming continue to thrive and develop without substantial IDRC investment?- e.g., TC, ID, FS <p>What do you think should be the priorities for the FEH program moving forward? Why?</p> <p>What do you think the FEH program should stop doing? Why?</p> <p>Is there anything else you would like to share that we haven't touched on?</p> <p><i>Thank participant and confirm consent form if needed.</i></p>	<p>G&E IDRC definition – promote gender-responsive solutions and gender-equitable conditions for health whenever possible</p> <p>Scale IDRC definition – refers to being at optimal scale versus scaling up interventions</p> <p>Southern leadership definition – supporting established leaders in low- and middle- income countries, at greater geographic scale</p> <p>Partnerships definition: being a “partner of choice” to other funding organizations and learning how partnerships may influence FEH programmatic decisions</p> <p>Environmental sustainability IDRC definition – One of FEH's main priorities is to understand the interdependent influences on dietary health by social and environmental determinants as they relate to transformations in food systems</p>	
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Grantee Questions

Question	Interviewer Notes	Comments
<p>Tell me a little about yourself and your current relationship with 1) IDRC and the 2) FEH program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which FEH funded projects have you been involved in or are currently involved in? - Location/region <p>How did you hear about the FEH program?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If you applied for FEH funding, what was your reasoning? <p>Please tell us about the nature of your interactions with the FEH program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who is your main point of contact? - Comments on reporting, monitoring, accountability, capacity building supports <p>Have you encountered any challenges during your time as a FEH grantee? <i>probe if interviewee does not share challenges</i></p> <p>Have you been involved with any previous funding programs from IDRC? If so, which ones?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do the previous ones compare to your current experience with the FEH program? <p>As a result of FEH funding, what will you be able to achieve or have already achieved through your project thus far?</p> <p>To what extent did you feel supported in implementing your FEH grant? How? (<i>probe for nature of support</i>)</p> <p>How does gender and equity play out in your project if any?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has working with FEH enabled you to incorporate gender and equity into your project? If so, how? 		

<p>- To what extent did you feel supported in incorporating a gender equity focus? How?</p> <p>Have you been able to scale your work as a result of FEH/IDRC funding? (<i>invite interviewee to elaborate on what they mean by scaling</i>)</p> <p>One goal of the FEH program (and IDRC as a whole) is to support Southern leadership. Please describe how you think this was achieved or not through your project?</p> <p>How does environmental sustainability play out in your project if any?</p> <p>How well has your project contributed to: <i>Ask why/ why not after each bullet</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influencing policy & practice? • Enhancing research capacity? • Generating new knowledge/ local evidence? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For e.g. grants, publications, other research outputs? <p><i>Depending on the nature of the project, ask only relevant one of the three:</i></p> <p>How has IDRC's FEH program contributed to building the field of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • food systems for NCD prevention, • tobacco control for NCD prevention OR • the field of intersectoral approaches to infectious diseases? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What has the FEH program allowed you to incorporate into your research design that you would otherwise not do or usually not do? - To what extent would the FEH-like programming continue to thrive and develop without substantial IDRC funding? <p>What kind of influence(s) do you anticipate your FEH-funded work will have in the coming years? (probe for concrete examples)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you foresee yourself applying for another grant? <p>What do you think the priorities for the FEH program should be moving forward? Why?</p>	<p>G&E IDRC definition – promote gender-responsive solutions and gender-equitable conditions for health whenever possible</p> <p>Scale IDRC definition – refers to being at optimal scale versus scaling up interventions</p> <p>Southern leadership definition – supporting established leaders in low- and middle- income countries, at greater geographic scale</p> <p>Environmental sustainability IDRC definition – One of FEH's main priorities is to understand the interdependent influences on dietary health by social and environmental determinants as they relate to transformations in food systems</p>	
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Question	Interviewer Notes	Comments
<p>Tell me a little about your current role within the FEH program [describe a “day-in-the-life”].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How long have you been working with IDRC? <p>Can you tell me more about your FEH portfolio of projects?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How many projects are you responsible for? - What are the thematic aims and regions of focus? <p>Based on your work, what factors (e.g.; within IDRC, across Canada, globally) have shaped the context in which FEH operates in?</p> <p>In your opinion, how and how well have the following 5 strategic issues been addressed through the FEH programming.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Gender and equity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>How has gender and equity been addressed?</i> ◆ <i>How well have gender and equity been addressed?</i> → Working at scale <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>How has working at scale been incorporated or operationalized into FEH programming?</i> ◆ <i>How well has working at scale been incorporated?</i> 	<p>If they had a previous role ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In your previous role what was it in relation to? <p>G&E IDRC definition – promote gender-responsive solutions and</p>	

<p>→ Building southern leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>How has building southern leadership been addressed?</i> ◆ <i>How well has building southern leadership been addressed?</i> <p>→ Partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>How has partnering with other granting agencies benefited IDRC (or not?)</i> ◆ <i>How have these partnerships come about?</i> ◆ <i>How well has the partnership been implemented?</i> <p>→ Environmental sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>How the FEH program links with other areas of IDRC programming such as Climate Change and Food Security?</i> ◆ <i>How it pursues co-funding opportunities for research at the intersection of nutrition and climate change?</i> <p>Can you speak to how the FEH program has contributed to policy & practice, new knowledge, and research capacity? <i>(ensure that you touch on all 3)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Across your portfolio], do you have any specific examples that come to mind? <p>From your perspective, how has the FEH program incorporated lessons learned from any earlier IDRC programs? <i>[Ecosystems and Human Health Program (Ecohealth) or NCDP (Non-Communicable Disease Prevention)– mention these only if they ask for examples]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What strategic decisions were made over the course of the last 4 years? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What informed and/ or prompted these decisions? - What were the outcomes and/ or trade-offs of these decisions? - Why were these strategies chosen for the implementation of the FEH program? <p><i>Field building</i></p> <p>How has IDRC's FEH program contributed to building a field of study? – for e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent do you see FEH approaches being accepted into mainstream health and development thinking, research, policy or practice? - To what extent would FEH-like programming continue to thrive and develop without substantial IDRC investment? - e.g., TC, ID, FS 	<p>gender-equitable conditions for health whenever possible</p> <p>Scale IDRC definition – refers to being at optimal scale versus scaling up interventions</p> <p>Southern leadership definition – supporting established leaders in low- and middle- income countries, at greater geographic scale</p> <p>Partnerships definition: being a “partner of choice” to other funding organizations and learning how partnerships may influence FEH programmatic decisions</p> <p>Environmental sustainability IDRC definition – One of FEH’s main priorities is to understand the interdependent influences on dietary health by social and environmental determinants as they relate to transformations in food systems</p>	
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What do you think should be the priorities for the FEH program moving forward? Why?

Are there any things you believe the FEH program should stop doing?

Is there anything else you would like to share that we haven't touched on?

Thank participant and confirm consent form if needed.

Annex 9: Biographies of external review team leads

Principal Investigator: Daniel Sellen, PhD.

Title, dan.sellen@utoronto.ca

Telephone: 416 978 2422

Daniel is an internationally recognized global health and public nutrition researcher who will lead and supervise all aspects of the proposed research opportunities as Director of the Joannah and Brian Lawson Centre for Child Nutrition at the University of Toronto, Distinguished Professor of Anthropology and Global Health, Professor of Nutritional Sciences, Professor of Social and Behavioral Health Sciences, and Senior Resident Scholar at the SickKids Centre for Global Child Health. With an active global health research program aimed at innovation and testing of interventions to improve maternal, infant and child nutrition security in vulnerable populations, Dr. Sellen has more than 25 years' experience teaching and designing "mixed" methods to understand and improve infant and young child feeding and care and have led or collaborated on maternal and child health and nutrition studies in multiple low income communities in Sub-Saharan Africa, Central America and South Asia. For example, as Principal Investigator, Dr. Sellen led a cluster-randomized trial to evaluate previous World Vision MNCH interventions funded by the Canadian Government; the design, administration and implementation of the research component of a project entitled "SUSTAIN-MNCH: Supporting Systems to Achieve Improved Nutrition, Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health"; and monitoring and evaluation of ENRICH (Enhancing Nutrition Services to Improve Maternal and Child Health in Africa and Asia) project, as the primary academic advisor on the research design and entire study. Currently, his team is working with international NGOs to test innovations using cell phones, "smart" devices and cloud-enabled data solutions in design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of community-based programs to support maternal and child nutrition and food security. Dr. Sellen also serves on several international grant and journal peer review panels, ethics oversight committees, editorial boards and technical advisory groups.

Co-Principal Investigator:

Erica Di Ruggiero, PhD. –

Title, e.diruggiero@utoronto.ca

Telephone: 416 978 6066

Erica is the Director, Office of Global Public Health Education & Training, Director, Collaborative Specialization in Global Health, and Assistant Professor, Social and Behavioural Health Sciences, Dalla Lana School of Public Health (University of Toronto). Erica obtained her BSc in Nutritional Sciences, a Masters of Health Science (community nutrition) and a PhD in public health sciences from the University of Toronto (focused on global health policy). She is also a registered dietitian. She was the inaugural Deputy Scientific Director with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research-Institute of Population and Public Health, where she led the design and evaluation of research, partnership and knowledge translation initiatives to address priorities including global health involving LMIC partners, health equity, environments and health, and population health intervention research. She has contributed to/ overseen several mixed-methods evaluations of multi-million dollar research funding programs in population and public health (e.g. Applied Public Health Chairs Program; health equity programmatic grants; evaluation of natural policy experiments research), and advised on the design of several global health initiative evaluations (e.g. Global Health Research initiative; Innovating for Maternal and Child Health Program). She also serves on several international and national grant peer review committees, editorial boards and technical working groups. For instance, she contributed to indicators that are part of a WHO global monitoring system for member countries to measure intersectoral action, programs and policies and their equity impacts in line with the SDGs and Rio Declaration on Social Determinants of Health. She also co-led and co-authored the first ever CIHR/NIHR Guidance on the relationship between context and population health interventions.

Her research, teaching and mentorship contributions largely focus on evaluating the health, gender, and health equity impacts of population health interventions such as policies that reduce NCDs and related risk factors such as unhealthy eating, and policies to promote decent work conditions. She currently leads research that focuses on understanding global agenda setting processes in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. She also has experience evaluating global health research capacity building initiatives. For instance, as lead for the Advanced Queen Elizabeth Scholar Program in maternal mortality, she is responsible for training 20 scholars from Canada and low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) to use mortality evidence to improve maternal and child health outcomes and become engaged leaders in their countries, and evaluating the impact of this training. She has also contributed to the scholarly literature on public/private partnerships in NCD, and on effective governance and knowledge exchange strategies that influence public health decision-making at national and global levels. She co-led and co-authored the first ever CIHR/NIHR Guidance on the relationship between context and population health interventions. She is a sought after mentor for her expertise in policy interventions related to chronic disease prevention. She was a lead facilitator and mentor at past global health summer institutes for early career researchers new to global health research organized by the Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research in Tanzania, India, and Mexico. She currently supervises/mentors masters and PhD students whose research address a range of topics (e.g. piloting/implementing and evaluating community-based interventions to promote breastfeeding; innovative HIV prevention intervention integrated with group-led matched-savings for street-connected young people in western Kenya; an assessment of food and nutrition inequities in the Canadian population; an exploration of policies related to gender-based violence in Guyana; and, examination of the healthfulness of product portfolios of major packaged food and beverage companies).

Annex 10: Terms of Reference of FEH Program Evaluation

RFP Title: Food, Environment, and Health Program Evaluation 2015-2020	RFP #: 18190029
Issue Date: Monday, January 21, 2019	Close Date & Time: Monday, February 11, 2019 at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time
Contracting Authority Division: Procurement Services Name: Lindsay Empey Title: Procurement Officer Email: fad-ps@idrc.ca Street address: 150 Kent Street, Constitution Square, Tower III, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 0B2, Canada / Mailing address: PO Box 8500, Ottawa, Ontario, K1G 3H9, Canada)	Originating Division: -Programs and Partnership Branch

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION The purpose of this section is to provide general information about the International Development Research Centre (“IDRC” or “Centre”) and this RFP.

1.1 IDRC OVERVIEW: IDRC was established by an act of Canada’s parliament in 1970 with a mandate “to initiate, encourage, support, and conduct research into the problems of the developing regions of the world and into the means for applying and adapting scientific, technical, and other knowledge to the economic and social advancement of those regions.” A Canadian Crown corporation, IDRC supports leading thinkers who advance knowledge and solve practical development problems. IDRC provides the resources, advice, and training they need to implement and share their solutions with those who need them most. In short, IDRC increases opportunities — and makes a real difference in people’s lives. Working with development partners, IDRC multiplies the impact of investment and brings innovations to more people in more countries around the world. IDRC offers fellowships and awards to nurture a new generation of development leaders. IDRC employs about 400 people at the head office located in Ottawa, Canada, and in four (4) regional offices located in Amman- Jordan, New Delhi-India, Nairobi-Kenya, and Montevideo-Uruguay. IDRC is governed by a board of up to 14 governors, whose chairperson reports to Parliament through the Minister of International Development. For more details visit: www.idrc.ca

1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS RFP: IDRC requests proposals for the provision Evaluation team to conduct an evaluation of the Food, Environment and Health (FEH) program, where requirements are described in section 2, the Statement of Work (“Services”).

1.3 DOCUMENTS FOR THIS RFP The documents listed below form part of and are incorporated into this RFP: • This RFP document • Annex A – Resulting Contract Terms and Conditions

1.4 TARGET DATES FOR THIS RFP The following schedule summarizes significant target events for the RFP process. The dates may be changed by IDRC at its sole discretion and shall not become conditions of any Contract which may be entered into by IDRC and the selected Proponent.

- Event Date RFP issue date January 21, 2019
- Deadline for Enquiries January 25, 2019
- RFP close date February 11, 2019

- Evaluation, selection, and notification of Lead Proponent February 15, 2019
Interviews/Presentations by short-listed Proponent(s) February 18-19, 2019
- Finalize Contract with Lead Proponent March 1, 2019
- Commencement of Services March 1, 2019

SECTION 2 – STATEMENT OF WORK This section is intended to provide Proponents with the information necessary to develop a competitive proposal. The Statement of Work (“SOW”) is a complete description of the tasks to be done, results to be achieved, and/or the goods to be supplied.

2.1 BACKGROUND The goal of the Food, Environment and Health (FEH) program is to improve the health of low- and middle-income country populations by generating evidence, innovations and multi-sector public policies that reduce the health and economic burdens of preventable chronic and infectious diseases.

The program has three thematic aims¹¹:

1. To target the major risk factors and drivers of the global, food-related, non-communicable disease (NCD) pandemic, with an emphasis on influencing shifts in local and national food systems and dietary trends towards healthier diets.
2. To prevent and control infectious diseases driven by social and environmental change by building upon the body of knowledge and leadership established through past IDRC funding. The previous work includes efforts addressing Chagas disease in Central America and the global threat of vector-borne viruses.
3. To reduce tobacco use as a major contributor to the global NCD burden, emphasizing scaling up and building upon the success of prior tobacco control research supported through previous IDRC programs and others.

FEH was formed in 2015 by merging two previous programs: Non-Communicable Disease Prevention and Ecosystems and Human Health Program (Ecohealth). It has supported more than 160 research projects for a total of over CA\$ 90 Million in all three themes, and the current programming cycle runs until 2020. With work in over 50 countries, FEH funded research that targeted reducing health and economic burdens, of both communicable and non-communicable diseases, by generating evidence and guiding policy interventions to promote health and prevent/ mitigate proven disease risk factors, such as tobacco smoking, consumption of highly processed foods and drinks, or risk behaviors associated with communicable disease transmission.

The program makes strategic investments in high-quality research aimed to influence policy and practice in the main thematic areas, harnessing the potential for donor partnerships to achieve greater impact. Emphasis is also given to supporting Southern-led research collaborations and/or coalitions that are multidisciplinary and multi-sector with intent to reach and benefit vulnerable populations in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. By emphasizing scaling up of development interventions, Southern research leaders, and multi-donor partnerships, FEH investments also aim at meeting IDRC’s key strategy objectives for 2015- 2020. It also emphasizes greater gender equity in its programming and has invested in strengthening its knowledge, tools and capacities to address gender inequities that often lie at the root of unhealthy food systems.

Since 2015, FEH made its main programming focus research on food systems and healthy diets. It saw the opportunity to play a leading role in growing a new field of high global health relevance and a need to help establish a critical mass of researchers from complementing disciplines in both the Global South and North who could actively collaborate in building this field. It also integrated the exploration

¹¹Although, FEH has pursued a smaller body of work related to legacy topics and in identified emergent areas that rests outside these three core thematics.

and development of donor partnerships as part and parcel of its programming in all three thematic areas. Its successes include research on 17 policies to reduce and prevent NCDs while building a body of evidence on the effectiveness of fiscal and regulatory public policies in 36 countries; the program was also successful in facilitating a rapid response to the Ebola outbreaks in West Africa and later in the Democratic Republic of Congo by setting up relevant research to guide emergency and post-emergency interventions.

2.2 PURPOSE: The primary purpose of this summative program evaluation is to demonstrate accountability for FEH Program investments over the period 2015 to 2019. Findings of the evaluation will be used to guide future programming in the FEH area at IDRC and articulate results to key stakeholders such as IDRC's Board of Governors, the research community FEH aims to work with, as well as the general public.

The evaluation will provide evidence and recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of FEH's strategies and enhance its outcomes. It should also provide insights on progress made in strengthening gender equity, donor partnership development, and the economic dimensions of NCD prevention in FEH programming and inform program and research improvements in these areas in the future.

The primary user of this evaluation is IDRC's Board of Governors, and its management. The secondary user is the FEH program. Tertiary users include project grantees, and researchers in general, research organizations, other research funders working in the three themes of this program, and the general public interested in IDRC investments in FEH research.

2.3 DESCRIPTION AND SCOPE OF WORK

2.3.1 Project Scope

In Scope: The scope of the evaluation is FEH's work on all three themes: food systems; infectious diseases; and tobacco control as well as selected legacy programming from the Non-Communicable Disease Prevention program and Ecohealth and emerging priorities in global health. However, the work on tobacco control is mostly externally funded and an independent evaluation is scheduled on this work. Infectious disease programming may also be assessed through other means. The greatest emphasis will be placed on evaluating the work on food systems and non-communicable disease prevention.

The evaluation will focus on investments (financial and time) of the FEH program over the period 2015-2019 and critical investments that were initiated before 2015, but became significant, strategic pieces of work within this period

Evaluation Questions:

Key evaluation lines of inquiry can be grouped into two areas: program strategy and program outcomes. Under each of these evaluation issues, a number of critical questions will be explored in order to unpack and appraise FEH performance.

2.3.2 Strategy

1. Given the context, risks and opportunities that emerged over the period, how well has FEH implemented a strategic body of research programming in the identified thematic areas of programming?
2. How effectively has FEH integrated IDRC objectives into its programming? How have these overarching strategic issues effected FEH programming? a) Scale b) Gender/Equity c) Partnerships

(relevance of parallel and co-funding) d) Economics of prevention e) Strengthening Southern leadership in research and research translation

3. The FEH program has emerged from years of IDRC experience, how well has the program done to learn from previous work?

2.3.3 Expected Outcomes:

1. What contributions has FEH made to policy/practice, research capacity, and new knowledge in the three thematic areas as well as legacy and emerging priorities in Global health? • How relevant and significant has the knowledge generation been to research in these areas and to meeting development (or global health) priorities?

2. Within these thematic areas, how have the key outcomes of policy/practice influence, research capacity development, and the generation of new knowledge been influenced by the inclusion of the over-arching IDRC and FEH strategic issues?

- Scale
- Partnerships (parallel and co-funding)
- Gender/equity
- Economics of prevention
- Strengthening Southern leadership in research and research translation

3. What are the most relevant and significant opportunities for FEH moving forward?

2.3.4 Methodology: To address the evaluation questions, FEH proposes a multiple-methods approach using qualitative and quantitative methods and diverse data sources. The data collection should be aimed at collecting evidence to address all the evaluation questions and making optimal use of existing data. The proposed evaluation methodology will be appraised based on its suitability for addressing all the evaluation questions.

FEH expects that the methodology will include the elements described below, although proponents are encouraged to propose tailored and strategic approaches that, in their view, would yield the most relevant and / or accurate findings:

- **Document Review:** To include but not be limited to: review of FEH core documents (implementation plan, impact pathways, thematic workbooks, program synthesis reports, annual reports, call for proposals documents, gender and regional strategies, etc.); and review of FEH project documentation including project proposals, grantee technical reports, IDRC project monitoring reports; and any interim and/or final research and research uptake products available.

- **Trackify:** The program's monitoring database "Trackify" is a source of quantitative and qualitative data on the program's achievements in relation to its results framework. This resource should be considered as a starting place for gathering key program performance data.

- **Interviews:** Conduct interviews with IDRC staff, FEH grantees, and other key external stakeholders, such as representatives from partnering institutions and other stakeholders working in the area that FEH encompasses.

- **Surveys and / or other data collection methods:** Surveys are a useful means of soliciting input from a broad range of FEH grantees and trainees. Bibliometric analyses of grantees' productivity, collaboration levels and patterns, and impacts can be added, as well as collection and analysis of data on capacity-building and other relevant sources of data as needed.

2.3.5 Tasks and Responsibilities: The chosen proponents will:

- Produce an evaluation design report and workplan. This will include the evaluation questions to be addressed, the methodology to be implemented, a work plan, including a schedule of expected dates, and a framework (cross-listing questions, methods and data sources), which will be shared with and approved by IDRC.

- Engage in data collection and analysis, including fieldwork (as required), as outlined in the evaluation design report and produce an outline of the evaluation report for feedback and approval by IDRC.
- Produce a presentation of preliminary findings and a draft evaluation report to be submitted to IDRC. The report should be a maximum of 35 pages long (excluding annexes).
- Produce a final evaluation report. It will include an executive summary of up to four pages. The report should respond to the questions outlined above and incorporate feedback from IDRC provided on the draft report. The final evaluation report will be a publically accessible document.

2.3.6 Project Budget: The budget for this project including all fees and expenses is estimated to fall under CA\$ 200,000.

2.4 IDRC RESPONSIBILITIES, SUPPORT, AND REPRESENTATIVES IDRC will identify a Project Authority to whom the successful Proponent will report during the period of a resulting Contract. The Project Authority will be responsible for coordinating the overall delivery of service, providing as required direction and guidance to the Proponent, monitoring Proponent performance and accepting and approving Proponent deliverables on behalf of IDRC. The Project Authority will ensure that appropriate subject matter experts from within IDRC are available to the Proponent to discuss and provide content material. The Project Authority will provide the relevant documents, including program-level documents, project documentation and other documentation to the proponent as needed; facilitate contact with relevant grantees, staff at IDRC, other donors, and other relevant stakeholders; and interact closely with the evaluators and provide timely input and feedback as needed.

IDRC will identify a Travel Administrative Representative, who will manage all travel requirements approved by the Project Authority.

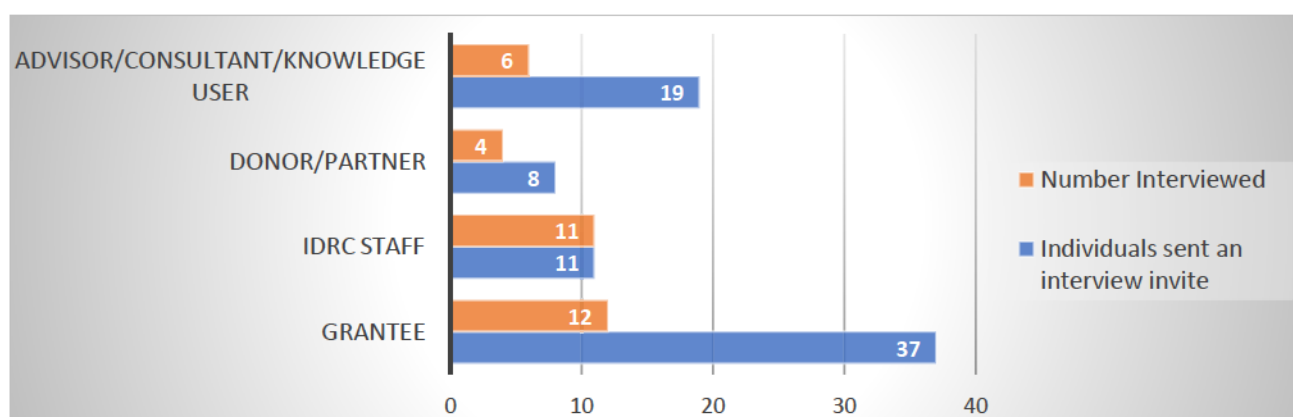
IDRC will identify a Contracting Authority, who will oversee a resulting Contract throughout its lifecycle, in conjunction with the Project Authority and the Proponent, create amendments for any changes to a resulting Contract, and answer questions on terms and conditions.

2.6 LOCATION OF WORK AND TRAVEL: Due to the type of Services required, the successful Proponent will be able to work from its own location. IDRC will not provide onsite facilities for the Proponent, other than providing facilities for on-site meetings. Travel is expected as part of this contract and details will be finalized at the time of contracting.

2.7 PERIOD OF A RESULTING CONTRACT: A resulting Contract is expected to commence on March 1, 2019 and conclude by July 19, 2019 and follow the following timeline.

ACTIVITY	Description	Milestone
Submit an Evaluation workplan	Evaluation workplan and design documentation including methodology, evaluation framework and initial list of informants to be consulted	Mar 1, 2019
Submit a revised detailed evaluation workplan	Modified workplan and design document based on feedback from IDRC	Mar 11, 2019
Submit Draft outline	Submit a draft outline of the structure of the report	May 31, 2019
Presentation and Submit Draft report	Present preliminary findings to the external advisory group and submit a draft report	June 21, 2019
Submit Final Evaluation Report	Final report of 35 pages maximum (excluding annexes) with an executive summary (no more than 4 pages). The report should respond to all questions outlined in the Statement of Work and that incorporates feedback from IDRC.	July 19, 2019

Figure 2. Overview of Key Informant Interviewees



A preliminary coding dictionary was derived from the evaluation questions based on main themes and categories. To pre-test the coding dictionary, two team members coded the same interview transcript independently using the preliminary coding dictionary and content analysis software (NVivo 12 Mac). Any discrepancies found were resolved, and changes consolidated before proceeding to code the remaining interviews.

Landscape Assessment: To set the context in which FEH operates, the evaluation team identified relevant peer reviewed literature, policy briefs, past IDRC program evaluations, commissioned reports, and grey literature. This assessment framed the interpretation of results, case studies and recommendations.

Case Studies: Four case studies were developed based on a framework agreed upon by FEH and UofT (see *Annex 1*). The evaluation team drew on findings from the document review, interviews, and the landscape assessment. A standardized template was developed to guide the drafting of case studies (also in *Annex 1*).

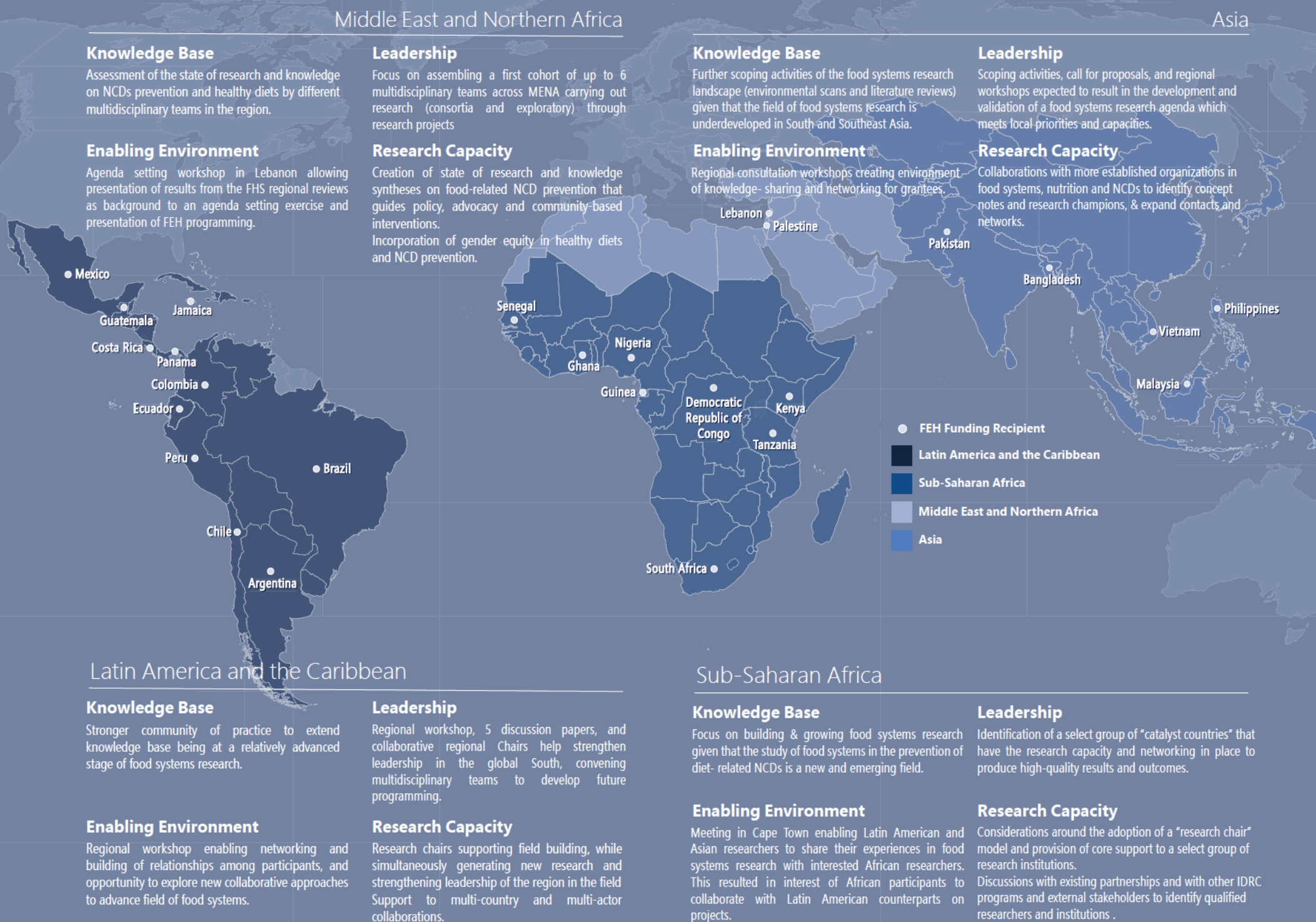
Analysis: The evaluation team reviewed program-level and then project-level documents (separate extraction tools used for each type of documentation- see *Table 1*), coded data from interviews in NVivo using the coding dictionary and findings from the landscape assessment. Evaluation questions (EQs) were divided amongst team members who worked in pairs, and findings compared and consolidated to address all evaluation questions, allowing for robust triangulation and consistency of interpretations and associated program recommendations. Although not part of the evaluation questions, UofT was asked to provide insight on the knowledge, monitoring and evaluation aspects of the FEH program.

Presentation of Preliminary Findings: Given the participatory nature of this evaluation, a second face-to-face workshop between UofT and FEH staff took place on July 25th and 26th 2019 to present preliminary findings and emerging recommendations (EQ6) for initial feedback and sense-making with FEH Program staff and IDRC's Vice President of Programs.

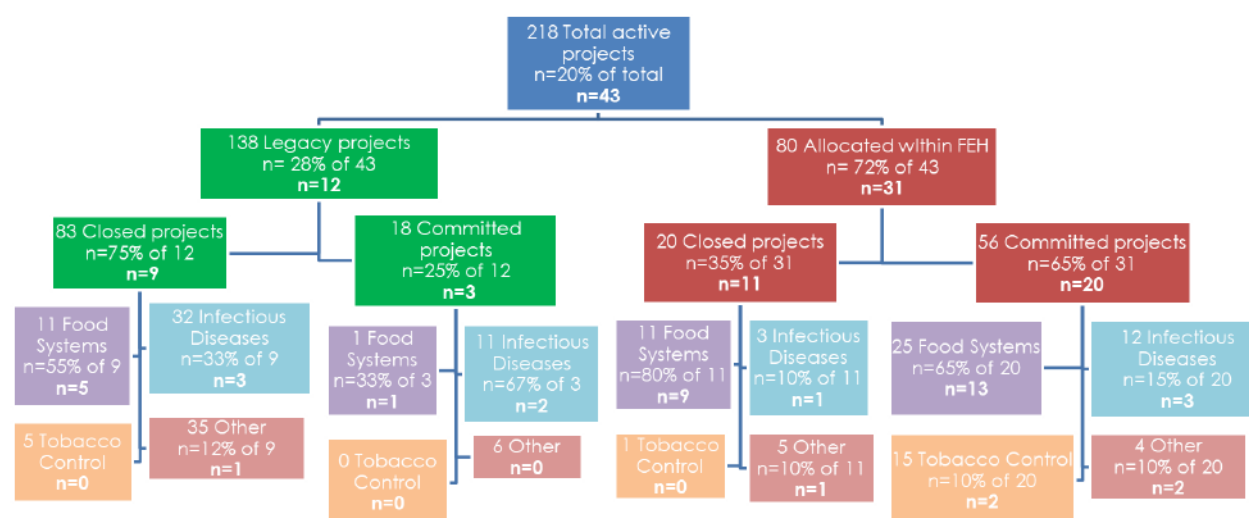
Challenges and Limitations: The evaluation team encountered a few challenges and also acknowledges some limitations with this program evaluation:

- **Variation and Volume of Project-Level Documentation:** There was variation in project-level documentation corresponding to the stage in the project's lifecycle, and in program requirements across components, geographies and time. The volume of project-level documentation and diversity of information and data to analyze for assessment of EQ4 and EQ5 (i.e. contributions in various "spheres" that FEH made to influence/effect policy/practice, enhance research capacity, and generate new knowledge; and the influence of the five strategic issues) demanded considerably more

Figure 3. Field Building Based on Regional Strategies with Contribution Highlights



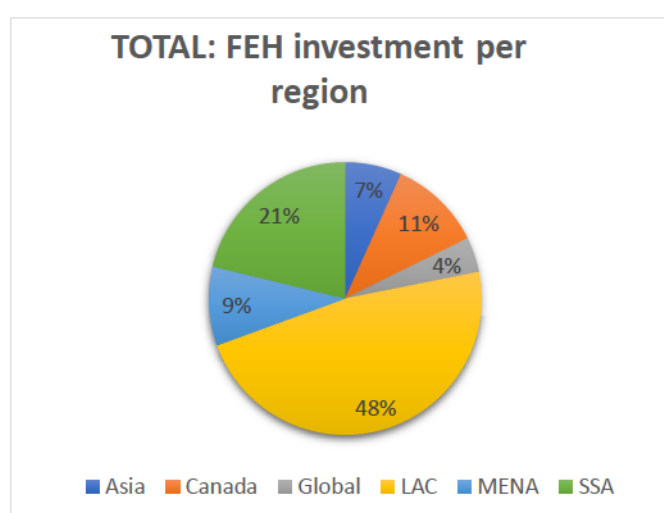
We will be proposing a sample representing one fifth of total amount of projects (n=43) devised based on two separate strategies: one for projects allocated within FEH strategic period (after April 1st 2019) and one for 'legacy' projects that were allocated prior to FEH strategic period:



Based on the drawn sample, we made slight adjustments to ensure adequate representation of all regions:

1. All awards were removed as they appear to be used to fund sponsorship activities or travel;
2. Within the Legacy projects, to better align with the distribution of project per region, we made slight adjustments to include two other projects: one from MENA and one from Canada;
3. Within those allocated within FEH, a number of projects did not have assigned regions and therefore based on the location of the recipient and title of the project, we assigned regions accordingly;
4. All aforementioned adjustments were done following the same random procedure based on the size of the investment across projects per category.

The final sample aligns with the breakdown of all FEH investments per region:





Total based on Sample

